

# *Almost an Angel*

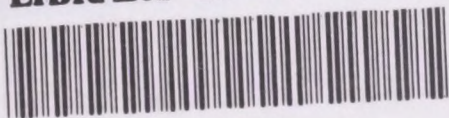
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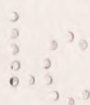






# ALMOST AN ANGEL

BY  
MARY M. FRIEND HARWELL

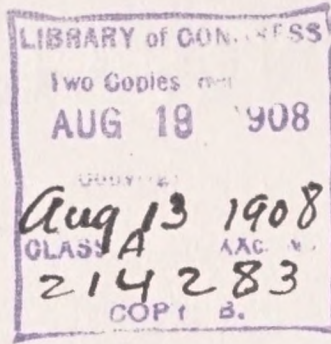


NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON  
THE NEALE PUBLISHING COMPANY

1908



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*“ She seem’d a splendid angel, newly drest,  
Save wings, for Heaven.”*

JOHN KEATS,  
*The Eve of St. Agnes.*







# ALMOST AN ANGEL

## CHAPTER I

### AT SUNDAY-SCHOOL

"The best love man can offer  
To the God of Love, be sure,  
Is kindness to His little ones,  
And bounty to His poor."

MARY HOWITT.

**T**HE church bells were ringing out their glad invitation to the Sunday-school in a Southern city.

Tap, tap, tap, sounded a little pair of crutches on the sidewalk, and on the crutches swung the figure of a boy. One side of his body was considerably contracted in consequence of severe and constant pain, yet the face of this sufferer was one of which a prince might have been proud. The skin was a clear, pale olive, the flesh as firm as marble, the features as regular and beautiful as those of a statue; the hair clustered over the broad, low forehead in waves of midnight darkness, and the great brown eyes looked out from the shade of their long, curling lashes with an expression now joyous, now mournful. It was the same contrast that his life presented be-



tween what it was and what it might have been.

On this Sunday morning the streets were crowded with boys and girls, also wending their way toward the Sabbath-school.

"Good morning, Herbert Lee," cried a bright, blue-eyed little maiden. "Are you well this morning, and do you feel happy?"

"Thank you, Edith, I am not in as much pain as usual; but," a shade passed over the boy's face, "I am not so happy as the boys who can run about and play."

Who could blame the little fellow for this speech? Truly, the cross that he carried was of iron, studded with piercing nails, and it was so hard to bear it without murmuring.

They had now reached their destination. The Sunday-school was held in the basement of the church, and, as the children entered, the atmosphere, warmed by a large heater on either side, afforded a pleasing contrast to the chill air they had left. A fountain played in the center of the room, and in the basin which surrounded it water-lilies were blooming in all their creamy loveliness.

On the superintendent's desk, facing the entrance, a pyramid of flowers was arranged. The bouquets were tokens of affection from the children to their teachers, and they were always distributed to their respective owners as soon as the exercises were concluded.



There were snow-white and brilliant red camellia japonicas, fragrant violets and hyacinths, chrysanthemums of all colors, and hot-house blossoms of every description.

"How very beautiful!" said Herbert in a low tone, as he paused a moment in the doorway to view the lovely tableau in front of him, of which the happy, smiling faces of the children, clad in their bright, holiday attire, formed a very attractive portion.

It was a scene which the boy had witnessed many times, but there was always enough variety in it to prevent monotony, and his truly poetic love of beauty made him rejoice in it.

The services were about to begin, and Herbert glided noiselessly to his seat in the class, and knelt reverently until the prayers were concluded. Then he joined in the singing with a will. Nature had made amends for his crippled condition by endowing the boy with the glorious gift of song. How his pure young voice poured forth its melody in that sweet old song, "Hark, hark, my soul!"

As he sang it, Herbert forgot that he was poor, that he was lame, that he had a sick mother. All the ills of life floated away from him, and he felt as if he had left this earth behind and joined the heavenly choir, as he poured out his whole soul in the last stanza:



“ ‘Angels, sing on! your faithful watches keeping,  
Sing us sweet fragments of the songs above,  
Till morning’s joy shall end the night of weeping,  
And life’s long shadows break in cloudless love.  
Angels of Jesus,  
Angels of light,  
Singing to welcome  
The pilgrims of the night.’ ”

“What makes you look at Herbert Lee so hard?” whispered one little fellow across the aisle to another.

“ ‘Cause he looks like the angel on my Chris’mas card,” was the reply.

The singing was over, and Herbert’s teacher, Miss Helen Demoville, gave him a warm greeting. The chubby little hands of his classmates were stretched forth in welcome, some of them filled with small bunches of violets and hyacinths, while others slipped crystals and alleys into his pockets, as well as small packages of ginger cakes and molasses candy.

“Take this seat next to the fire, Herbert,” said Sidney Lyon, a plump little boy whose cheeks glowed with health. “I ain’t cold a bit, and you are, I reckon.”

Herbert’s bright, expressive face beamed with gratitude.

“That is right, Sidney,” his teacher smiled approvingly. “Always be on the lookout to do a kind act, especially to those who are less fortunate than yourself. It is a habit which



grows with practice, and it will develop a boy into a noble man."

Then they began their lesson. On the blackboard in front of them was the illustration, beautifully drawn with colored crayons. It represented Simon the Cyrenian bearing the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The expression on the man's face was very lifelike, and the text in German letters was, "Bear ye one another's burdens."

Miss Demoville asked the questions on the lesson paper in regular succession.

"Now that is what I call an excellent lesson," she said as she finished, "and no one has recited more beautifully than Herbert Lee, although the rest of you have done quite well also. But something more than learning the mere words of the Bible is necessary; that is, we must enter into the spirit of the lesson, and apply the truth to our own lives. Unless we do this, all the study we could give the Scriptures, even if we spent every moment from our births to our deaths in poring over them, would do us no good. It is only the religion which makes us better and purer Christians that is worth striving to attain.

"Now let us see what we can learn from the picture. In the first place we are told that the Jews compelled this man to carry the cross of Christ. Do you think, then, that he deserved any credit for his action?"



Some of the boys answered, "Yes, ma'am," others said, "No," and the rest of them looked puzzled.

"I think that he did not," said their teacher, "for, unless we do a thing from a good motive, we are not entitled to any praise for what we do. Now if this man Simon had borne the cross for Jesus because he loved our Lord and wished to save Him pain, the act would have been very meritorious. But as he was forced to carry it, his motive was not charity or love, but merely obedience to those who had authority over him. 'Bear ye one another's burdens,' says the text. When we see any one in sorrow or sickness or suffering,"—the eyes of the beautiful young woman rested lovingly on Herbert Lee,—"*it is our duty to do everything we can to comfort and relieve him. Even a kind word will often do more to cheer one than language can express. I am always glad when I see you perform any little act of kindness for your classmates, for that proves that you have the true spirit of love in your hearts. Do you not remember the words of the hymn?*

"Little deeds of kindness,  
Little words of love  
Make this earth an Eden  
Like the Heaven above.'"

When the closing exercises were over, the



superintendent approached Miss Demoville with his hands full of flowers.

"Sweets to the sweet," he said with a smile. "These are all for you, Miss Helen. See how popular you are! Gifts of affection from pupils in nearly every class in the Sunday-school."

"Thank you, Mr. Arrington. I am afraid that I do not deserve my good fortune, but the children seem to understand my passionate love for flowers. Are they not beautiful, Herbert?" She held them close to the little lame boy for inspection.

"They are lovely, Miss Helen, and they are so sweet! Oh, I wish that my mother could see them!"

"Your mother, Herbert? My dear boy, she shall! I will give them all to you to take home to her; and now will you not sit down and tell me all about her? I have long wanted to know, but I have never had an opportunity of asking you about her."

She glanced at Herbert's face. The tears were streaming down his cheeks. She passed her arm around his shoulder. Her sympathy touched him, and he opened his proud, sensitive little heart as he had never before done to a stranger.

"Miss Helen, my mother is sick all the time, and her cough gets worse every day, and we have only what my sister Emma can



make by sewing. Late last night she carried home a piece of work it had taken her all the week to do, and the lady said she had forgotten to draw the money out of the bank, and so this morning we had no fire for mother, and nothing for any of us to eat."

Miss Demoville's cheeks flushed with indignation.

"Herbert, who was this lady who kept back your sister's hard-earned wages, and caused you so much unnecessary suffering?"

The boy hesitated a moment, then he answered slowly:

"Her name is Mrs. Fairfax, Miss Helen."

"Mrs. Fairfax! I know her well, and she is one of the richest ladies in the city. How can people act so?"

She pressed her hand to her forehead, and thought for a few moments.

"Herbert, may I go home with you this morning?"

The boy's eyes sparkled.

"Oh, if you will, Miss Helen! Mother will be so glad to see you. I have spoken of you so often to her."

The air outside the church was keen and cold, as the wind was blowing from the north. Miss Demoville glanced at the thinly clad little figure at her side.

"Wrap this around your throat, Herbert," she said, handing him her long fur boa.



"You'd better keep it, Miss Helen." But when she insisted he took it.

"Now, Herbert, you have not told me where you live," she said presently.

"It is on the corner of Jefferson and Buchanan streets, ma'am."

"You don't say so! Why, that is more than two miles from here. Surely, you did not come all that distance on those poor little crutches?"

Herbert nodded. "I always walk both ways!"

As Miss Demoville patted his dark, silky hair, her eyes filled with tears.

"What do you say to a ride, Herbert? I may not hold out as well at walking as you do, you know."

"All right, Miss Helen." The boy's face glowed with delight. "That is a pleasure I do not have very often, except when Dr. Herndon takes me in his buggy."

The car they took was empty, as every one was going in the opposite direction to church.

"Now, Herbert, you will have an opportunity of entertaining me. Will you tell me something of your family history?"

"Yes, Miss Helen. You have been so kind to me that I am glad to do anything I can for you. My mother speaks very seldom of her younger days, for she says it makes her feel sad to think of them. But I have



heard my sister say that our grandfather was a baronet, and that he lived in a beautiful castle in England, and was wealthy.

“When our mother grew to be a young lady, Miss Helen, she met my father, who was a handsome and talented artist; but he was very poor indeed, although he hoped to win fame and fortune by his pictures. My grandfather was bitterly opposed to his daughter’s marrying her lover, for there was a man of great wealth who wanted her to be his wife. But she and my father loved each other so well that they agreed to meet at the little village church, early one morning in June, before the inmates of the castle were awake, and they were married very quietly, and then my father took his bride on the train to Liverpool, where they took an ocean steamer and came over to America. When my grandfather knew that his daughter had disobeyed him he vowed that she should never have a dollar of his money.

“My father opened a studio in New York, and for a long time he succeeded splendidly, and he received a great deal of money for his paintings, and his wife and little daughter lived in comfort and style. Then I was born, Miss Helen, and one day soon after, my father was taken suddenly ill and died.

“Then my mother had a hard struggle with poverty. She taught school for a long



time, and managed to support herself and her two children. But after a while she took a bad cold, and it settled on her lungs. The doctor said she must try a Southern climate, so we came here, and for a time she seemed better; but for the last year she has been growing worse all the time, and I do not see how she can live much longer. Oh, Miss Helen, you do not know how much it distresses my sister and myself to feel that we are not able to give her all she needs!"

The little fellow sobbed as if his heart would break. Miss Helen put her arm around him. After a time he looked up.

"Here is the place where we ought to get off." A short walk brought them to their destination.

"Can it be possible that this refined-looking boy lives in such a dwelling as this?" thought Miss Demoville.

It was indeed a miserable abode. It consisted of one low room, with a shed that had never been painted. There was a door but no windows, and the whole structure looked as if it might tumble down if you stared at it.

"It is not exactly a palace, is it, Miss Helen?" Herbert said with a grim little smile. "Walk in, Miss Helen," he said, holding the rickety old door open for her. Through the cracks in it and those in the wall, which would have admitted the body of a



cat, the wind swept. Yet there was no fire on the hearth, and down the wide chimney rushed gusts of air which shook the neat cut paper on the mantel. There was an air of scrupulous neatness about the room, which was all the more apparent on account of its poverty-stricken appearance.

In the farther corner of the room stood a bed on which a woman reclined. Over her bent a young girl, trying in vain to relieve a severe spell of coughing which had attacked the patient as soon as the door was opened. When the coughing had somewhat subsided, Herbert went up closer, and pressed an affectionate kiss upon his mother's forehead.

"Mamma, this is my dear Sunday-school teacher you have heard me speak of so often, and now she has come to see you. Miss Demoville, this is my sister Emma."

Mrs. Lee was still coughing too hard to be able to speak, but the soft pressure of her delicate blue-veined hand and an expressive glance from her beautiful brown eyes, so very much like Herbert's, assured Miss Demoville of her welcome.

Emma's greeting was far more self-possessed than that of most girls of her age would have been. Indeed, she had so much dignity and grace, and her appearance was so aristocratic, that involuntarily Helen Demoville thought of the lordly castle in England, and the rich heritage that Herbert had told her



that his mother had given up for love's sweet sake.

"I feel very grateful to you for your interest in my son, Miss Demoville," Mrs. Lee said, as soon as she could speak. "Your name has become a household word with us, and I thank you greatly for making the Sunday-school so attractive to Herbert, for it is one of the very few pleasures the poor child can have. At times he suffers terribly with white swelling, and he is often confined to his bed for weeks at a time. The suffering of my child is a greater affliction to me than my own sickness, I assure you, Miss Demoville."

Helen had blushed when Mrs. Lee praised her so highly.

"I have done only my duty, Mrs. Lee, and I am afraid I have not performed that well, for I should have called on you weeks before when your son first entered the school. Herbert is one of my brightest pupils, always attentive and obedient, perfect in his recitations, and very popular with the other boys."

Her face was glowing with enthusiasm, and Mrs. Lee thought it was the most beautiful countenance she had ever seen. There was a wealth of light golden-brown hair tastefully arranged at the back of her head. Her fair forehead, so transparent that the blue veins formed distinct crescents on her temples, was adorned with a profusion of



little silky rings which did not obscure its fine contour. Her dark blue eyes reminded one of moist violets, and they looked at one with a frank, pleasant expression. Her eyebrows were arched and delicately pencilled, and her lashes were long and fringed, and were much darker than her hair. Her nose was of the pure Grecian type, her chin full and well rounded, and her cheeks glowed with the hue of health. But her mouth was her most charming feature. The lips were like coral, full, arched, and with dimples in the corners, and they closed lightly over teeth like rows of pearls.

“How beautiful!” was Mrs. Lee’s involuntary exclamation. Then, as she saw the crimson tide that covered her visitor’s face from brow to neck, she exclaimed: “Ah, forgive me! But you can imagine that one who has been an invalid for years must rarely come in contact with anything very pleasing to the senses. I think I was born with an intense love of beauty, and I married an artist who cultivated and intensified the feeling until it has grown into a passion.”

The young woman only smiled. She was not a vain person, yet she was perfectly aware that Nature had been quite liberal to her. Her mirror told her this, she heard it also from her numerous friends and her lovers.

“I believe you came from England, Mrs.



Lee," said Helen, by way of introduction to a conversation.

"Ah, yes, from that dear old country where the aristocracy grows and flourishes; where there are lords and ladies, and where the poor are never allowed to suffer for the want of attention. Would you like to hear about the days when I was a young girl, Miss Demoville?"

"Indeed, I would; more than I can tell you."

How the cheeks of the invalid glowed and how her eyes sparkled as she told of the balls and parties she had attended in London, describing her own dress and that of many celebrated ladies of that period, whose names were familiar to Miss Demoville, who listened with rapt attention, scarcely heeding the flight of time. At length she took out her watch.

"Dear me, I had no idea how late it was! It is a quarter past one o'clock, and we dine at two on Sundays. I must not keep my father waiting, so I will say good morning." She pressed each hand of the ladies cordially, and gave Herbert a kiss.

When she left the house it seemed to the inmates as if a ray of sunshine had departed, or, in the beautiful words of Longfellow:

"When she passed, it seemed like the ceasing of exquisite music."



## CHAPTER II

### A FRIEND IN NEED

"In all this earth there is not one  
So desolate and so undone  
Who hath not rescue if they knew  
A heart-cry goes the whole world through."

EDWIN ARNOLD.

"I DO not think that I ever had a more delightful visit," thought Helen. "But Mrs. Lee did not make any allusion to her destitute circumstances, and I felt as if I could not broach the subject to one whose appearance is so elegant and refined. Yet something *must* be done to relieve their wants immediately, or they will certainly starve and freeze. Let me see how I can accomplish it. I wonder if there is a grocery anywhere in this neighborhood? These small shops usually keep a little of everything, including fuel, in their stock, and the proprietor generally lives in or near them, so that it would be easier to make a few purchases on Sunday here than in the business portion of the city, where the police are more vigilant. 'The end justifies the means,' in this instance at any rate. I



wish that I could find somebody to direct me where to go. The name of this place should be 'Sleepy Hollow.' Perhaps every one has gone to church, but it is time that they were beginning to return."

As she spoke she saw a very queer-looking object approaching her. When it drew nearer it proved to be a tall, gaunt woman between sixty and seventy years of age. She was dressed in a faded green cotton skirt with five narrow, gathered ruffles at the bottom, which flapped around her bony ankles and was short enough to reveal two very knotty feet encased in a patched pair of man's shoes, with elastic on the sides. On her body she wore a loose blue flannel sack which touched her nowhere except in the neck. Her hands were squeezed into a pair of spotted, bright yellow, undressed kid gloves, while her remarkably small, narrow head was surmounted by a fussy-looking royal purple bonnet, covered with ostrich plumes, ribbon and flowers. She carried a gaudy red parasol, embroidered with white, which had several ribs sticking out.

As they met, Miss Demoville paused, with the intention of asking the way to the nearest grocery; but before she could do so, the old woman's voice piped out, in a shrill, nasal whine:

"Hit 'pears lak I've seed yer some'res before. I knows that hat, sure's my name's



Eleanor Ioly Peniny Piminty Burns. Yes, ma'am, that's my entitle, the hull on it. I got five cows and five niggers fer my name, but hit don't do nairy bit er good ter talk erbout that now, sence the Yankees is sot 'em free. But we used ter be rich, I kin tell yer. Father and mother used ter own a big plantation down yander in Massissip on the Chickasahay River. They is charcoal burners down there, but we didn't burn no charcoal, I kin tell yer. I used ter milk nineteen cows of a mornin' and er evenin', an' we sol' twenty-one pats er butter every week. But I must er seen yer at Dr. Markham's church. Yes, ma'am, I goes there, ef I does look poor and plain, and I don't set in no free pew, nuther. Miss Bennett hires a pew, an' she lets me set with her, 'ca'se ther' hain't nobody 'cep'in' her an' her old man, and he seldom ever comes ter church, 'ca'se he runs a great big gambling saloon, and Sunday mornin's is his busiest time. But jes' lis'en at me er tellin' tales outen school. Fust thing I know the perlice 'll git er holt er hit, an' close 'im out, all on ercount er my long tongue. He give me these shoes er hisn," sticking out her foot, "an' she gin me this waist, an' Miss Owen give me this here skirt I got on, an' this here bunnit was Miss Randolph's mother's, an' Miss Cap'n Jinks give me these gloves and this umberill'. They don't none o' them fit me very well," pulling



her sleeve tight enough to show the outline of her arm, no larger than a broomstick, "but they'll keep off the cold, an' I'm thankful fer anything."

She paused a moment for breath, and Helen took the opportunity of clipping in while she had a chance.

"Mrs. Burns, I want you to tell me if there is any place near here where I can buy something to eat for a family in whom I feel a deep interest."

"Yes, ma'am, hit's them Lees, ain't it? I knowed hit was soon as ever you spoke, 'cause the little lame boy, Herbert, they calls him, goes ter Dr. Markham's Sunday-school, an' I reckon you're his teacher he's allers er talkin' erbout. Them Lees is the nicest folks I ever come acrost, an' I've seen er heap er the quality. I quilts comforts an' scrubs fer 'em, yer know. But these is the proudest folks I ever seed. I verily believe they'd starve ter death before they'd ask anybody fer a bite er victuals. I wish ter the Lord I had some money; I'd divide with 'em handsomely. Ter my certain knowledge they hain't got er bite er anything ter eat in the house this day, 'ca'se I run over there a little while this morning, an' Herbert was er cryin' 'cause there warn't no breakfast fer him ter eat; 'An' I can't miss Sunday-school, Miss Burns,' says 'e, 'fer hit's the onliest pleasure I has,'



says 'e, the poor little cripple. So I runs home ter see ef there was any potatoes lef' from our breakfas'. But Burns, the greedy pig, had eaten the last mouthful er 'em. 'You hadn't oughter done it,' says I, snatchin' the tin plate he was er lickin' ter git the last drop er bakin grease, an' rappin' 'im over the head with it. 'Boo-hoo,' says 'e, like er spoiled child, but he dassent ter hit me back. 'I reckon I got er right ter eat 'em,' says 'e, 'w'en I planted 'em an' hoed 'em an' dug 'em,' says 'e. 'You never would er done it,' says I, 'ef I hadn't er stood over yer an' made yer,' says I. 'Hit's all you Irish is fitten fer,' says I, 'is ter raise yer Irish *praties*, as yer calls 'em.' 'You're er hoosier,' says 'e, er gitten' mad like. 'Say that ergin,' says I, pickin' up er chunk er light-'ood. 'Ef I thought I had air drop er Irish blood en mer veins,' says I, 'I'd tek the scissors an open mer skin an' let hit run out ef hit killed me.' 'Yer married er Irishman,' says 'e, sassy like, but er shakin' in 'is shoes fer fear I'd hit 'im wid the knot er wood. 'That was 'ca'se I didn't had no better sense,' says I. 'You bet, hit never would er happened, nohow, ef you hadn't er got ol' Jake Mahone ter do yer talkin' fer yer,' says I. 'Yer ain't got sense ernough ter court a woman, wid yer blunderin' Irish brogue,' says I. 'But I wus er great big fool,' says I, 'the day I ever let



the priest marry me to er whimperin' ol' idgiot like you,' says I. He never opened 'is mouth. I kin allers shet 'im up er talkin' that er way. 'Now,' says I, 'you sets ther' an' roasts them pertaters tell I comes back from church,' says I, 'an' I'll crack you over the head with this stick ef you lets 'em burn,' says I. But come in, this is my house. Walk right in, an' rest yerself. I'm kinder tired myself. Four mile is a right good piece fer an old lady sixty-nine year old ter walk."

She threw open the door of a building originally intended for the kitchen of a tall white house, which was now occupied by colored people.

"The bottom rail is laid on top sence the surrender. Niggers in the white house, and white folks in the kitchen. Walk right in, ma'am, an' make yerself ter home."

Miss Demoville shook her head.

"Father will be waiting dinner for me, so I haven't time. Please tell me the way to the place where I can get the groceries."

"Yes, ma'am, certainly. I'd go with yerself ef I wasn't jest fairly broke down. Burns," she called to a meek-looking little Irishman, sitting on a stool near a very poor fire, "put down that pipe you are smoking; who gave you tobacco without my leave, sir? Get your hat, sir, and show this lady the



way to Mr. Hobson's, and step lively, sir; do you hear me, sir?"

Burns snatched a worn fur cap from its peg on the wall, stuck it on his head and started off at a brisk pace in front of Miss Demoville.

"Don't go so fast, Burns," shouted his wife, standing in the doorway, and putting both hands up to her mouth; "the young lady can't keep up with ye. Lord 'a' massy! Ye ain't no mortal 'count on top er this yearth, noway. Ye ain't got no more gumption 'an er chil'!"

A short walk brought them in sight of a closed building, in front of which hung a sign which read:

JOSIAH HOBSON,  
Fine Family Groceries.

"You can go back now, Mr. Burns," said Miss Demoville. "I am very much obliged to you," and she slipped a quarter of a dollar into his hand.

"A t'ousand t'anks, miss." The old fellow bowed until he nearly touched the ground, as he thrust the coin into the bosom of his flannel shirt. "Don't tell 'er you gave it ter me, miss, fer I want ter git er bit dram ter warrum de ol' feller's 'art de morrer," with an idiotic grin. "Yer wouldn' belave hit, miss, but she'd bate me ef she knowed hit." With a whine he limped away.



"Ting-a-ling," sounded the door bell at the side of the store, as Miss Demoville gave it a pull.

"I have no money with me, so I will have to ask for credit for the first time in my life; I wonder if they will refuse it?"

To her great relief, the round, rosy face of the individual who answered her summons was a familiar one. Where had she seen it before?

"Miss Helen Demoville, ef I'm er foot high! Why, bless my buttons, I'm took clair offen my feet! How *do* you do, ma'am? I have not seen you, ma'am, for *several* years; not sence I was clerking for Butterworth, Sweetser & Co., and you used to buy candy on your way home from Mrs. Latham's school. Maybe you remember me, Josiah Hobson's my name, ma'am. You used to be one of our best customers in those days."

Helen laughed.

"I was very fond of chocolate caramels then. Yes, your face does seem familiar to me, Mr. Hobson, although I do not remember having heard your name before. But have you not grown stouter than you were then?"

"Yes, ma'am, considerably. I think it is because I don't take as much exercise as I used to. You see, I used to walk to and from my work three times a day, and that sort o' kept my flesh down. But sence I've set up



in business for myself, me and my wife live over the store to save expenses, you know, and I don't get a chance to get out in the streets, except of a Sunday. It's my dinner time now, or you would not have found me at home. But what can I do to serve you, ma'am?" rubbing his hands together in a fashion he had when waiting upon customers. "For I am very sure you have come to see me upon business, if it is the Sabbath day."

"I have, Mr. Hobson. I came to ask a very great favor of you. I know that the Sunday laws of this city are very strict, and I do not want to be the means of having you arrested, but I want you to see if you cannot contrive some way to let me have something for a poor family."

"It's the Lees, ma'am, isn't it? Yes, I thought so, ma'am. Best people I ever saw, ma'am, but as proud as a peacock; not like the pride of the rich, ma'am, but like a few of the poor we come across occasionally in our business. Why, often and over again I've said to that young girl, 'Miss Lee, while it is not my custom to give credit, my terms being cash, as that sign over the counter says, yet I am willing to make an exception in your mother's favor. Your credit, ma'am, is good in this store for any amount you choose to call for.' 'Thank you, Mr. Hobson, you're very kind,' says she, civil like; 'but mother



says she will not have anything she cannot pay for when she buys it.' And they have carried it out, even to a nickel. But I am keeping you standing, ma'am. I would ask you into our parlor, but my wife is sick abed, ma'am. Shall I take your order, ma'am?" drawing a note-book from his pocket. "You see I can take the things from my own pantry and replace them in the morning." There was a sly twinkle in his eye.

"I have no money with me, Mr. Hobson, so I shall have to ask you for credit."

"That's *all* right, ma'am. You can have just what you want and pay me whenever you please. There isn't a cleverer gentleman in the State than your father, Colonel Demoville. Why, I fought in his regiment during the war," triumphantly. "You ask him if Josiah Hobson wasn't a brave soldier. Why, there's where I got the end of this here thumb shot off, in the terrible Battle of Seven Pines. But how high do you want to go, ma'am?"

"Not over five dollars," Miss Demoville replied, remembering that was the amount she had left of the quarterly allowance her father always gave her. "And I think we had better put in cooked food, crackers and loaf bread, if you keep it, and canned tongue and ham; a little cheese and a few sardines would be very good for Mrs. Lee, for she



needs rich food. And do you keep wood and light-wood, Mr. Hobson?"

"I am out just now, Miss Demoville, but I'll take some from my own woodpile; and I'll add a few oranges and a tumbler of jelly as a present from me, and I will take a little memorandum of the items, and put them in a basket, and carry them around myself just as soon as I eat my dinner; my boy is off to-day. And shall I say your compliments, ma'am?"

"If you please, do not, Mr. Hobson. They did not mention their circumstances to me; I only found it out through the little boy who is in my Sunday-school class; so I should be afraid of mortifying them by showing them that I had observed their poverty."

"*Very* well, ma'am; and I hope the Lord will reward you. Yes, ma'am, that is the way to the cars. *Much* obliged, ma'am, and I hope you'll call again. *Good* morning, ma'am," with quite a low bow and a military wave of the hand.

"Good morning, Mr. Hobson. Thank you for giving me credit. I will call and pay you in a day or two."

She had to walk rapidly to catch the next car. It was empty, the tide of travel being again in the other direction. Helen was tired from standing so long in the cold wind, and the car was anything but comfortable. She was ravenously hungry, having eaten very



little breakfast in her haste to get to Sunday-school in time, and altogether, she felt quite miserable.

The temptation that never fails to assail us under such circumstances came to her in the form of a regret for the money she had promised to pay out for the Lees.

"It was the last five dollars I had," urged Selfishness. "Perhaps it would be wiser in me to get Mr. Hobson to send the bill to father's office, and let him pay it."

"But that would not be any charity on my part, if I did that way," urged her better self, "and father is hard pressed for money already; I know it because his countenance looks so troubled. Besides, his allowance to me is very liberal, and it is quite as much as he can afford, and it ought to cover my fund for charity, as well as all my other expenses; and there would be no merit in my doing good unless there was some self-denial exercised on my part."

"But how about taking Fanny and Jennie Trueheart to the *matinée*?" still pleaded Selfishness. "They have taken me several times, and the season closes soon, and I ought to show them some attention. I am afraid the girls will be disappointed about it."

"How can they be when I have not mentioned the subject to them? And if they were, what is it for three persons to give up



a few hours of a pleasure they enjoy quite often in order to keep three others from freezing and starving? Oh, Helen Demoville, I am afraid you are growing weak and worldly and selfish and unworthy to be called a Christian! I am growing quite ashamed of you, I am, indeed."

When she reached home and rang the door bell it was answered by a slim, dark servant who had been Helen's nurse.

"What for mammy's lamb stay so long at de chu'ch? Venus say de dinner done mos' dry up on de stove, an' she jes' mos' on her head ter get er baptizin' ober de creek at her chu'ch, 'ca'se her darter done got 'ligion an' come t'rough, an' er gwine ter be baptized dis berry day, an' Jeems done ask yer par ter let 'im off, an' he done gone, 'ca'se he gwine marry Viney, an' I gwine wait on de table an' tek his place tell he come back dis ebenin' ter light de gas, 'ca'se I cyarn't git up an' down lak w'en I was er gal, 'ca'se my bones is stiff wid de rheumatis'."

"I've been somewhere, Mammy. Where's papa?"

"He's in de lib'ry. B'en er waitin' fer yer mos' an hour."

"Well, you can have dinner now. I will eat with my hat on, so that Venus can get off right away."

She stole softly into the library. Her



father was sitting by a comfortable fire reading a newspaper. She tiptoed up to him, and kissed him on the forehead.

"Well, daughter, where *have* you been? This is not Communion Sunday, is it?"

"I have not been to church to-day, papa."

"Not been to church?" Colonel Demoville's tone expressed the greatest surprise. "Why, I never knew you to stay away from church on the Sabbath day before. Why, Helen! How could you do such a thing?" Like most gentlemen who have their praying done by the ladies of their families, the old gentleman had very strict ideas on the subject of religion—for other persons.

"I never missed attending the services of the church on Sunday before," Helen said slowly. "But to-day I found a higher duty."

"A higher duty than to serve your Maker?" asked her father in surprise. "I was raised to think that there was no higher duty than that! 'What is the chief end of man?' they used to ask us in the catechism. 'To serve and glorify God,' or something of the kind, was the answer; it has been so long ago I have forgotten."

"Well, papa, let me eat my dinner first, I am awfully hungry and the servants are anxious to get off to the baptizing, and then I will tell you my story, and let you judge



whether or not I was right in neglecting my religious duties for once to serve others."

When the meal was over, Helen seated herself on a stool at her father's feet near the fire.

"Let me sit here, papa, while I talk to you. I have been so chilled to-day that I feel as if I should never get warm again. Well, then, 'to begin at the beginning,' there is a beautiful little boy in my class at Sunday-school who is lame, and who walks two miles each way on crutches to the Sunday-school, which seems to be the only pleasure he has. When the exercises were over I gave him some flowers to carry to his sick mother. Then he burst into tears, and by degrees I learned from him that they were in very destitute circumstances, and that they were without fuel and food, because a rich woman had neglected to pay his sister for some sewing she had done. Papa, I thought it was my duty to go out and see about them."

"It was, indeed, my daughter. Go on."

"I found the mother very ill. The house was a wretched one, they had no fire, and I saw no appearance of food in the room. I had a delightful visit. Mrs. Lee told me a great deal about her home in England, but she never made any allusion to her poverty. But when I left, I hunted up a grocer in the neighborhood, and got him to send her some



provisions and wood; and that is why I am late for dinner, papa."

"You did perfectly right, my daughter. Did you find out who she was before her marriage, Helen?"

"I did not, papa. Herbert told me her father was a lord, and that he disinherited his daughter because she married a poor artist, and——"

"Herbert, did you say her son's name was? I knew some people of that name in England."

"I thought you were born in France, papa."

"So I was, but I was educated in England. Tell me exactly where they live, and give me my hat, daughter, and I will hunt them up and see if Mrs. Lee is not one of the friends of my youth."



## CHAPTER III

### AN OLD FRIENDSHIP RENEWED

"The pains and griefs of other days  
May, shadow-like, pursue me yet;  
But toward the sun my face is set,  
His golden light on all my ways."

SAMUEL STILLMAN CONANT.

**A**S Colonel Demoville hailed a passing car two young men on the opposite side of the street raised their hats to him.

"I wonder where the old gentleman is going in that direction, Wallace?" asked the slimmer and more dude-like of the two.

"I could not say, Phelan," replied the other, who had a very attractive countenance, without being exactly handsome. "Perhaps he is going to look after some of his real estate. I have heard that he has quite a number of houses which he rents out, and they say they are scattered in all directions."

"But you do not suppose he would attend to matters like that on Sunday, a man of his standing?"

"Certainly not. But in riding past them he might see whether there were any fences



blown down by the late storm, or whether the chimneys or the roofs need any repairs, or any of a dozen other little items, and then he could send a workman to see about them to-morrow, for they say that the old gentleman does not employ a real-estate agent, but pockets all the profits himself. However, this is a mere surmise on my part. Of course it is no affair of mine, and I have no right to make any conjectures on the subject. I have quite enough to occupy me in attending to my own business, without interfering with that of other people."

"That is so." Phelan winced at the sarcasm. "Yet persons will wonder when they see any one deviating one hair's breadth from the perpendicular of the beaten track custom has marked out for society people to travel. Of course opinions differ, but it is my belief that this propensity to gossip over the unusual keeps many from straying outside the fold, when they know that, as the old Scotch song has it:

" 'A chiel's amang ye takin' notes,  
And, faith, he'll prent it.' "

"You may be right, Phelan. I never thought of gossip in that light before. Yet, on the other hand, how easy it is to misjudge a person's actions, making 'trifles light as



air' become 'confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ.' Do you know, Phelan, that I believe that character, as well as lives, has been sacrificed on the altar of circumstantial evidence?"

"You make me think, Wallace, that there is a fearful responsibility lying upon our words."

"Phelan, I wish we could all think that, and remember it always. How many heart-aches might be spared to suffering humanity if all the world acted upon this principle! Colonel Demoville has a lovely young daughter, Miss Helen. Have you ever met her?"

"I know her by sight only. She is very beautiful, I think. The latest report is that her father's bookkeeper, Lawrence, is desperately in love with her."

"I should not be surprised if he were. Yet I am sure the admiration is not mutual, for I never saw a young lady treat a visitor with such polite indifference as in this case. After he left the house one night, Shorter and I laughingly remonstrated with her on her cruel treatment of one who so evidently adored her, and she replied, 'Well, gentlemen, I may be wrong, and I hope that I may prove to be so, but I took an unaccountable aversion to that man the first time I ever saw him. I have tried hard to overcome it, for father thinks a great deal of the young man, and



trusts him implicitly in his office, but I do not like his countenance. It is not frank and open, as it should be to inspire confidence.' ”

“ Do you know, Wallace, I have heard a dozen ladies speak in the same way of this Lawrence? Some of them say that they have caught him in slight prevarications, not calculated to harm any one but himself, but sufficiently far from the truth to make any one doubtful of his veracity. And by the way, what a contempt ladies have for any one who is not strictly truthful! ”

“ Yes, God bless them, they deserve the praise for everything that is good about men. But I hope that for once Miss Helen's judgment is in error, for I would not have her interests harmed for anything in this world. She is one of the truest, best friends I ever had. Understand me, Phelan, I am not in love with her, as all the other men who visit her seem to be. I may have some conceit, but I am very conscious that I do not reach the very high standard Miss Helen has adopted for the man who shall be the fond possessor of her heart and hand. Therefore I offer only friendship at the shrine of Beauty, where others are sacrificing the best years of their life in the vain hope that they will win her love.”

In the mean time, Colonel Demoville was



riding along in the jolting, comfortless street car, unconscious that he and his affairs were the subject of so much discussion. There were no passengers except himself, and the want of anything to interest him made the way seem doubly long and tedious.

"Dear me," he said with a yawn, "this is certainly a doleful quarter of the city. No lawns, no flower gardens or summerhouses, nothing to beautify the landscape, and the houses are of the plainest and most dilapidated appearance. Why, bless my life! I never was in this quarter before, and I have lived in this city twenty years. Rents must be quite low in this neighborhood, or the landlords would certainly keep the buildings in better repair."

Just then the driver stopped the car.

"This is your corner, sir, and that is the place you were inquiring for," pointing down a side street to the middle of the next block.

"Thank you, but are you sure that is the house where Mrs. Lee lives?"

"Quite sure, sir," touching his cap.

"I doubted it only because that place looks too dilapidated for human beings to inhabit. Why, bless me! it looks scarcely fit to shelter cattle."

"Yes, sir, but it is what we all may have to come to afore we die. Good morning, sir."



When he drew nearer to the miserable abode, Colonel Demoville was still more struck with its utterly wretched appearance.

"Why, dear me! dear me!" he ejaculated, "if Mrs. Lee should prove to be my old friend, Alice Herbert, how this change in her fortune would demonstrate the irony of Fate! Just to think of her father's castle, and then to compare it with this hut! It is preposterous!"

Tears glistened in his dark eyes. He wiped them away, and knocked at the door. It was opened by Emma Lee, who was slightly startled when she beheld a very erect, aristocratic-looking old gentleman who, without speaking, walked into the room and up to her mother's bed. The girl was just wondering whether to consider the man as a mute or a lunatic, when Mrs. Lee gave a cry of surprise and joy.

"Arthur Demoville!"

"Alice Herbert!" Colonel Demoville clasped her hand warmly in his own. "My dear old friend, but how very sadly altered! I remember you as a fresh, rosy girl of sweet sixteen, as beautiful and blooming as this young lady, and then to come and find you like this!"

He sank into a chair, and covered his face with his hands. The tears trickled through his fingers. Mrs. Lee seemed much affected



also, yet, womanlike, she forgot her own grief in trying to comfort her friend.

"Arthur, do not take this trial so hard. It is the will of God and we must submit. I believe that I have done so already. I have made my peace with my Maker, and now I am only waiting for His summons."

"But what will become of your children, my dear friend?"

"I am perfectly willing to leave them in the hands of my loving Heavenly Father, feeling perfectly confident that He will provide for them. 'When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up.'"

"Alice, your faith is so beautiful! Freely would I give every dollar that I possess if mine could equal yours."

"Arthur, you can attain even greater faith than mine if you will only strive and pray to God to give it to you; and believe me, dear friend, it is a gift which is worth any effort. It is more valuable than houses or lands, more priceless than money or jewels, for only by its possession do we gain that 'peace of God which passeth understanding.' " The light which shone in her large brown eyes seemed almost angelic.

"My dear old friend of childhood's happy days, I will strive hard to attain it, and I beg that you will intercede for me at the Throne



of Grace, for we are told that 'the prayers of the righteous,' dear Alice, 'availeth much.' "

" Arthur, I will pray for you as long as my life lasts, and then beyond the grave, if I shall be permitted. Now let me tell you of a rare pleasure we had this morning in a visit from a young lady who teaches my son, Herbert, in the Sunday-school. She was very sweet and beautiful, and she listened with so much interest when I told her of my life in England. We happened to be without fuel or provisions, and, although I did not allude to our poverty, she must have noticed it, for soon after she had left, Mr. Hobson, our nearest grocer, brought us a supply of everything we needed, and he refused to tell us who was the generous donor. But I am perfectly sure that the gift came from Miss Helen Demoville. By the way, Arthur, can it be possible that she is related to you? "

" She is my only daughter, and she is one of whom any father might justly be proud," replied the Colonel. " She told me of her visit to you, and that is why I came. I thought when she mentioned your name and that of your little son, and some of the circumstances of your family history, that you might be the playmate of my youth, and I am delighted to find that my surmise was correct."

" So am I, my good friend. Just see how



stupid I am growing since my illness, when I did not even suspect that you were related to that sweet angel of mercy! But then you know, Arthur, that I was not then aware that you were living in America."

"That is quite true, for my home was in France when we used to know each other. Now, Alice, I do not wish to be inquisitive about your affairs, and I hope that you will understand my motive when I ask the liberty of making one inquiry."

"Certainly, Arthur, just as many as you like."

"Do you ever hear from your father now, Alice?"

"Never, Arthur. He has not answered one of the letters that I have written him since my marriage. They have always been returned to me unopened."

"And you receive no remittances from him?"

"Not one penny. When I married without his consent, father swore that he would never forgive me, and you can well imagine, Arthur, that a man of his indomitable will would be very slow to break his word."

"But does he know of your adversity, Alice?"

"I think not. A month ago I humbled my pride and wrote to ask aid of him, not for myself, for I shall soon be where I shall not



need food nor raiment; but I asked him to take pity upon my innocent children, who had never done anything to offend him, when their mother should have passed 'beyond the sighing and the weeping.'"

"And he replied——?"

She shook her head sadly.

"The letter was returned unopened, like those which I had written years before."

A long pause followed, filled with gloomy thoughts on either side. Colonel Demoville was the first to speak.

"Alice, will you give me your permission to write to your father, and to tell him of your destitution? If his heart is not harder than a stone he cannot fail to be touched by the story of your misfortunes. I would make an appeal to his pride, and you know he has an unlimited amount of that, and I would ask him whether he preferred to let those of his own blood suffer, or be assisted by strangers, or to give them what I consider to be their just inheritance?"

Mrs. Lee reflected a while before replying.

"For the sake of my dear children, Arthur, you may write to my father, and I thank you more than I can express."

"And now, Alice, in reference to another matter. Excuse me for saying so, but this is not a fit abode for a lady of your birth."

"I know it, Arthur, but the rent is almost



nothing, and we could not afford a better house."

"I understand, but I am anxious to make a pleasant little change for you. A few blocks from here I have a small cottage that I have not been able to rent for nearly a year, on account of a foolish report of its being haunted. Now, the insurance policy that I hold upon it requires that it shall be occupied, and if you and your children are strong-minded enough to risk 'the spooks' you will confer a great favor upon me, Alice, by living there, as long as you wish, without paying rent, and thus you will convince these silly old gossips of the falsity of the rumors they have started."

"I shall be delighted, Arthur. Children, do you hear? Colonel Demoville offers us a pleasant house to live in as long as we wish, without paying any rent. Ought we not to be very grateful to him for the privilege?"

Herbert almost shouted with delight, and Emma thanked Colonel Demoville in a graceful way.

"Suppose you get everything arranged for moving to-morrow, and if the weather is pleasant Tuesday I will send my drays and a carriage to take you to your new home, if that will be agreeable to you."

"Thank you," replied Mrs. Lee. "I feel as if a change, even of a few blocks, would improve my health. Arthur, I wish to show



you something. Emma, will you be so kind as to hand me that morocco box on the top of the chest? Thank you." She opened it and took from it a handsome diamond cross.

"Do you remember this, Arthur?"

"Yes, it was your father's present to you on the day of your graduation; and you have kept it all these years, Alice?"

"Yes." She pressed her lips to it. "It is my dearest possession, for it is a happy reminder of the days when my father loved me, and there was no estrangement between us. But only this morning, Arthur, I had made up my mind to dispose of it to obtain money to keep my children from suffering, perhaps starving; and then that angel, your daughter, came, and now there will be no necessity for my parting with it for a long time, at any rate."

Colonel Demoville was much affected.

"I hope that you can keep it always, Alice. As long as I have a dollar I am willing to divide with you, the same as I would do with a sister."

"Arthur, I see you have the same noble, generous heart. Ah, do not those pleasant days of our childhood seem like a happy dream?"

"They do indeed, Alice. I remember so well how sweetly you used to sing 'Ben Bolt'! My daughter has often wondered why I love



to hear that more than any of her other songs, and I told her that it was in memory of a very dear friend. The words sound very appropriate to our lives now, for there have been so many sad changes since then. I feel as if it would be 'a sorrow's crown of sorrow' to me to return to the old country now, Alice. Would it give you pleasure to be able to go there?"

"Only to see my father once more before the summons comes to me to go hence." The tears were streaming from her eyes.

They talked for a long time of the scenes which they had witnessed in England, and the twilight was beginning to gather when Colonel Demoville arose to go.

"You will come again, Arthur?"

"I can hardly tell, Alice. You know how prone human nature is to shrink from whatever makes us sad. I do not know whether I shall be able to nerve myself to come again, for it distresses me so greatly to see you suffer, and when I think of you in the years that are to come, I want to remember you as you were in the days of your girlhood. But my daughter will come frequently, and you must let me know if I can serve you in any way. Dear friend, farewell!" He clasped her hand between his own. "If we should meet no more, you must pray for me in that pure land beyond the stars." Pressing his handkerchief



to his streaming eyes, he departed. Helen met him at his own door with a kiss.

"Was Mrs. Lee the person whom you were looking for, papa?"

"Yes, daughter, we were schoolmates long ago. Oh, it distresses me so much, Helen, to see the terrible ravages that disease has made in her once lovely countenance! I should never have recognized her if it had not been for her voice, but she knew me immediately. Helen, I should like you to take this to her to-morrow," handing her a twenty-dollar gold piece. "Put it into an envelope, and slip it into her hand when you bid her good-by."

"Certainly, papa, I will do it. I never met a family who aroused my interest so thoroughly upon such a short acquaintance. They are all so lovely, and yet God's hand seems to lie on them so heavily."

"Yes, daughter. It has always seemed to me one of the greatest mysteries of Providence that so many good persons should have to endure such fiery trials in this world."

"'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth,' papa. We can never reach the spiritual altitude to which our souls aspire until the dross of our natures has been consumed in the furnace of affliction."

"That is true, Helen. Your mother used to speak of that, and she was greatly sanctified by her sufferings."



"Papa, will you be so kind as to accompany me to church to-night? When the services are over I should like to ask Dr. Markham if he will not call upon Mrs. Lee some time this week. I think that she ought to have all the comfort religion can give."

Her father hesitated for several moments before replying. He was not fond of attending church at night. The slim congregations, he thought, were discouraging alike to minister and people, and for his own part he always grew sleepy, so he had gradually left off going some years ago. Yet when he considered how seldom his daughter made such a request of him, what a pleasure it was to her to attend church, and that she had been debarred the privilege that morning, he could not find it in his heart to refuse.

"Certainly, Helen, I will go with you with pleasure, my darling," he answered, somewhat to her surprise.

As soon as tea was over they went to church, and fortunately there was quite a large congregation. Dr. Markham made one of his most brilliant efforts, and Colonel Demoville's eyelids behaved admirably.

"How did you like the sermon, papa?" Helen inquired when it was ended.

"Very much. Why, if they are always so good at night, I must come all the time. I would not like to miss another one."



"Sometimes they are better than that, papa. It would make me so happy if you came often."

Helen told Dr. Markham of her wish that he should visit Mrs. Lee at his earliest convenience, and she gave him the lady's address.

"If you should call on Mrs. Lee later than to-morrow, Dr. Markham, you will find her in the house on the northwest corner of Pine and Magnolia streets," said Colonel Demoville.

"Why, papa, that is one of your houses, is it not?" asked Helen as they walked toward their home. "How is it that the Lees can afford such a comfortable home?"

"There is a rumor that the place is haunted, so no one will rent it, and Mrs. Lee has consented to occupy it and thus convince the neighbors that the report is false."

"You are the dearest father a girl ever had! I do not know when I have been so happy."

That night Colonel Demoville handed the letter he had written to Mrs. Lee's father to Helen to read.

"Do you think it expresses her situation emphatically enough, daughter?"

"Yes, papa, it ought to melt a heart of stone."



## CHAPTER IV

“THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS  
THYSELF ”

“Better than grandeur, better than gold,  
Than rank and title a thousand-fold,  
Is the healthy body, a mind at ease,  
And simple pleasures that always please;  
A heart that can feel for a neighbor's woe,  
And share his joys with a genial glow;  
With sympathies large enough to enfold  
All men as brothers—is better than gold!”

MRS J. M. WINTON.

**T**HE next morning when Helen Demoville awoke her first thought was of the Lee family.

“Perhaps I have been dreaming of them,” she thought. “At any rate, I must go out this morning, and pay Mr. Hobson's bill, and hand Mrs. Lee the money papa sent her. How noble it was of him to be so generous, for I can see that money is not so abundant with him as it was a few years ago, and I have no doubt he will have to deny himself something to which he has been accustomed. I am going to try ever so hard to make the household expenses light this month. But



what a blessing this money will bring to these poor people—proper food and medicine for the mother, and a good fire for them all. I have no doubt they will make it last them a long time.”

By ten o'clock she had finished her house-keeping, which consisted principally in giving directions to their very competent servants, and she was ready to start out for her visit.

“Dear me,” she said as she looked into her pocket-book, “I have only enough money to pay Mr. Hobson's bill and one carfare, so I shall have to walk back. But I ought to be able to stand that much exercise when Herbert Lee comes both ways on his crutches. If it tires me a great deal I shall come to the conclusion that the life that I have been leading is entirely too enervating, and I will walk out there until I grow so strong that I can stand four miles instead of two.”

The ride was a solitary one, but her thoughts occupied her so entirely that it seemed neither long nor dreary. She went first to Mr. Hobson's store.

“Why, Miss Demoville, you really need not have been in such a hurry,” exclaimed the old man, rubbing his hands together as Helen took out her purse. “Your credit is perfectly good in this store, ma'am, to the amount of f-i-v-e h-u-n-d-r-e-d dollars, for six months or a year, if you like. Just suppose, ma'am, that



you let the bill stand this morning and get some more articles when the Lees need them, and you can pay me whenever you find it convenient."

"Thank you, Mr. Hobson, I do not like to break my habit of promptness in money matters. You know the old saying about short accounts making long friends."

"That is true, in a general way, ma'am; but every rule has exceptions, and I don't think there is any danger of me and you falling out. But as you like about paying, ma'am. Take a seat while I make out your bill. I always have such a run of custom early Monday morning that I do not get time for my bookkeeping until late in the day. You see, ma'am, I am in the habit of giving a small present to each customer who comes before nine o'clock of a Monday, and I find that the plan works splendid, and it pays me tremendous well. Most of the men who live around here work in the foundries, Miss Demoville, and they draw their money too late Saturday night to spend it, so, in this way, I get the first chance at it as soon as Sunday is over; and I just tell you, ma'am, that when Josiah Hobson can't sell a customer anything you may be certain that he either does not want it, or that he has not the money to buy it with. I generally know what he needs from the bills that I have sold to him before.



I'll bring you the little memorandum, ma'am, in one moment."

He returned with the bill sooner than Helen expected him.

"It amounts to exactly five dollars, as you said, ma'am. Just pass your eye over the items, and see if you don't think that I displayed some judgment in selecting them. Or perhaps you had better let me read it to you, ma'am, for you are not accustomed to my handwriting, and I write such a very queer fist. You see, in doing a cash business, like mine, I don't have occasion often to make out a bill, and if I did the customers would have to understand it by what they knowed they had got. Ha, ha, ha! But my wife generally does any very particular writing for me. She is a very highly educated lady, ma'am. In fact, before I married her she used to teach school down in Sleepy Valley. But I will read over the items rapidly to you, ma'am, for mebbe you want to go. Ther's tea, coffee, sugar, flour, meal, grits, lard, butter, yeast powders, canned beef, tongue and ham, and a few little things that I threw in myself. Yes, ma'am, they was delighted to get them, and I would not let on who sent them; but I think they suspicioned who it was, for that little one, he's a sharp fellow for his age, cries out, 'I know it must have been my teacher, Miss Demoville,' and of course I



kept my mouth shut, for I could not dispute the truth, you know. Now, ma'am, just pass your eye down the line, and see if you can discover any error in the figures. I ain't always strictly correct in my calculations, although I am honest, and I'd be obliged to you if you would point out any mistake you see. None at all? Yes, ma'am, that is right. Thanks, and I hope you will call again whenever you need anything in my line. Good morning, ma'am," bowing her out of the door.

"Now, I hope that Fate will protect me from that other great talker, Mrs. Burns," thought Helen, "or the day will be gone before I reach Mrs. Lee's house."

But when she passed the house she saw the old lady in the yard standing over and superintending her husband, who was spading up the ground.

"Good morning, ma'am," said Mrs. Burns at the top of her voice. "You're gwine ter Miss Lee's, I s'pose. She ain't no better. I heered from 'er this mornin', but somebody sent 'er a whole passel er nice groceries yis-tiddy. I wish ter God they'd er sent me er basketful while they wus er sendin'. I gits mighty tired er eatin' jist pertaters an' salt all the year eroun', I kin tell yer. I foun' that quarter you give Burns tucked away in 'is shirt, an' I taken it an' bought me er good



piece er bakin with it, an' that'll las' me fer er month. You see, I don't allow Burns to eat meat w'en I happens to have any. No, indeed. Let 'im eat 'is 'praties,' as he calls 'em. He bein' er Irishman an' raised on 'em, hit don't hurt 'im like hit does me what wasn't."

All this time Mr. Burns was standing behind his wife's back, making frantic signs with his hands and mouth to Miss Demoville, which that lady interpreted as a request for more money with which to buy a drink. The old lady wheeled suddenly around and caught him by the shoulder.

"You, Burns, behave yourself, sir!" she ejaculated as she shook him soundly and gave him a sharp cuff on the ears. "You see, ma'am, he won't work one lick lessen I'm er watchin' of 'im jest like er child; an' that groun' is jest 'bleeged ter be broke up an' planted in pertaters, fer if it don't bring in er crop we won't have nothin' ter eat for the nex' year. But come in an' set down in er cheer an' res' yerse'f, an' let's have er good long talk. I kin give yer er nice cup er buttermilk one er my neighbors sent me this mornin'."

"I am very much obliged to you, Mrs. Burns, but my time is limited this mornin'."

"Well, then, yer mus' call erg'in. Yer



mustn't think no harm er me bein' out here in my Mully Hubber' wrapper, as they calls 'em now. I jest put hit an' this see'sucker sun-bunnit on ter be loose an' comf'terble like while I was er watchin' Burns ter make 'im work."

Helen caught the last words as she turned the corner. A short walk brought her to Mrs. Lee's poor home. When she knocked, Herbert came on his crutches and opened the door. It was a pleasure to look at his radiant countenance as he stood in the door almost speechless with delight.

"Good morning, my dear boy. Is your mother better to-day?" asked Helen as she stooped to kiss his beautiful forehead.

"Oh, I think so, Miss Helen," was his quick response. "We are all so happy that it makes us feel better, even if we are not really so. We have had so much good fortune since you left here yesterday, ma'am. First came a basket of splendid groceries and some wood, and we are ever so much obliged to you for them. Then your father came, and he offered us such a nice house to live in, and we have been thanking God every moment since then for His goodness toward us."

"That is right, Herbert; you must thank God for your blessings, for they come from Him. We only hold his gifts in trust."

Mrs. Lee held the young lady's hand for



some moments without speaking, and her beautiful eyes were moist with tears.

"How can I ever find words to express my thanks for your kindness to me and mine?" she said, after some moments had passed.

"Please do not try, Mrs. Lee. Let us talk about moving, instead. Do you feel as if you will be strong enough to stand the fatigue to-morrow? You know that you could wait until later if you thought it necessary."

"I think that I can bear it, Miss Helen. I am so anxious to make the change, for I imagine it may improve my health, although I know that it is hardly possible that it should do so. I do not think that I realized thoroughly how very uncomfortable this miserable abode was, until there was a prospect of my having a better one. You see, Miss Helen, I was trying to follow out the concluding portion of 'my duty toward man,' which I learned long ago in the catechism when I lived in dear old England: 'Not to covet nor desire other men's goods; but to learn and labor truly to get mine own living.' That part it is not possible for me to perform while I am so ill, but this I try to obey: 'and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me'; so I tried to be satisfied with my fate. But Dr. Herndon will call this afternoon, and I will ask his advice about moving, and I will find some way



of letting you know what he decides about it, in order to save your father the trouble of sending his drays to-morrow, in case the Doctor thinks that we had better not move then."

"Would you prefer that I should come or send for your answer, Mrs. Lee?"

"I am very much obliged to you, Miss Helen, but I should not like to give you unnecessary trouble. Dr. Herndon has been so very kind and attentive since he has attended me that I do not think that he would object to sending a note or a message for me. Do you think that he would know where your father's office or residence is, Miss Helen, or will you be so kind as to leave your address here?"

"Dr. Herndon visits occasionally at our house, Mrs. Lee." By chance Helen glanced at her own reflection in a tiny mirror and she felt provoked when she saw that a deep blush covered her face. As if to turn the conversation, she said:

"Can I not help Emma with her packing, Mrs. Lee? I wore an old dress for the purpose."

"Thank you, Miss Helen, but there is scarcely anything of that kind to be done. This house is so small that we have only taken from the boxes what we absolutely needed, and they can be put up early to-morrow morning. But I should be very glad to have you



take charge of my diamond cross, as that might be lost in moving. Herbert, will you be so kind as to call your sister Emma to come and get it for me? She is in the other room."

Emma came in and spoke to their guest, as she handed the jewelry case to her mother.

"Oh, how exquisite!" exclaimed Helen as the diamonds flashed before her eyes.

"Yes, it was my father's present to me on the day that I was graduated. Colonel Demoville recognized it immediately when I showed it to him. Just to think that I never guessed that you were his daughter when I first saw you! and now I discover that there is quite a striking resemblance between you, although you are a blonde, while he is very dark."

"Thank you, Mrs. Lee. I appreciate your compliment."

"My dear young lady, you could not resemble a better person. I hope that you will wear my cross while you have it, for the sake of the friendship which has existed between your father and myself for so many years."

"I am so much obliged to you, Mrs. Lee. Perhaps I may wear it in the house, in case I have any visitors in the evening, but I should be afraid of losing it if I wore it on the street, or in a crowded hall. But, Emma, you seem to be in trouble," as she observed the



red and swollen eyes of the girl. "Can I not assist you in some way?"

"You are very kind, Miss Helen," said Emma, her tears beginning to fall again. "I have taken in a large quantity of children's clothing, which must be finished by Thursday afternoon, for their mother is going away then, and my sewing machine is out of order, and it will not take a stitch. I hate to send it to the shop to be repaired, because they always keep it so long, and then I have no money to pay for it, on account of a certain person's neglecting to pay me, so I do not know what I shall do. I dislike to disappoint this lady about her work, for I promised her faithfully that I would do it, and it may be impossible for her to find any one else who can attend to it just now. Besides, I do not want to risk the loss of her custom when she returns, for she is prompt and liberal in her payment, and she is not at all exacting. But the more I work at the machine, the worse it grows. I do not think that the trouble can be remedied without putting in a new tension wheel."

Helen was anxious to assist this sweet young girl, and she felt so sorry that she had no money so that she could have the machine repaired, and pay for it herself. Her conscience reproached her when she thought of the many foolish expenditures she had made



during the last quarter for confectionery and other luxuries. But there was one way in which she could help in this matter, and that was by stitching the work at home for Emma. It cost her a hard struggle to make the offer, for she was so constituted that she disliked to sit still, consequently sewing was to her a very irksome task. She always gave out the greater portion of her own work, and she felt that she was perfectly right in doing so, for she helped the poor to make their own living, and her own household, social and religious duties consumed much of her time and strength. There followed quite a sharp conflict in her mind between Duty and Inclination. At last the battle was won, and the cloud vanished from her troubled face.

"Emma, I have a White sewing machine, and it is in excellent order. In fact, I have used it very little since I bought it, and I can do very good work on it when I try. So if you will give me very explicit directions about your sewing, I will take it home with me this morning and finish it for you, and you can devote your whole time and attention to your sick mother, and to your preparation for moving."

"Oh, Miss Helen, you are so kind and good!" It was worth the sacrifice to see Emma's countenance change its expression from utter wretchedness to perfect bliss. "I



cannot tell you how troubled I have been about this matter. Last night I could scarcely sleep for thinking about it, and now you have settled it by a wave of your wand, like Cinderella's fairy godmother! Yes, indeed, I will show you how she wants it done, and I will consider your doing it for me the greatest favor in the world. This piece is to be stitched to this one, so."

She gave a long list of directions which would have bewildered any one who was not an expert; but Helen concentrated her mind upon them, and she understood them perfectly. When she had concluded, Emma wrapped the articles in a newspaper.

"This bundle is too large for you to carry, Miss Helen. Suppose you let me go with you to the car and put it on, and the driver will take it off for you when you reach your house."

"I will not go directly home, Emma." Helen blushed with the effort to conceal from them the fact that she was not going to ride. "Papa wishes me to see how the painters are getting along putting a coat of paint on the outside of your new house, and whether his office boy is washing the windows and scrubbing the floor thoroughly."

"He is very kind. Can I not go with you that far, then, and carry your package?"

"Thank you, Emma, it is so light that I



do not mind it. Good morning, Mrs. Lee. I hope that I will find you much better when I call again." She slipped her father's gift into the hand of the invalid, and then she hurried away to escape the thanks which she knew would follow.

Helen found the cottage the scene of much industry when she reached it. The painters were busy on the ladders with their brushes, the carpenters were hammering away, and the glaziers were repairing the damages done by the bad boys while the place was vacant. The colored boy was down on his knees scrubbing the floors and the women of the neighborhood were craning their necks to find out the meaning of the unwonted commotion in "the haunted house."

"Do you think you will finish the job to-day, Mr. Joiner?" Helen asked the head workman.

"Yes, ma'am, I expect to get through at sundown this evening; but if it should be necessary, we will work here until midnight, and make the folks around here think that there are spirits in the house, sure enough," and he laughed loudly. "I have given my word to your father, Miss Demoville, that the house shall be ready to-morrow morning, and my word is my bond, ma'am."

"I asked because I wanted to know whether the family could move in to-morrow."



"Yes, ma'am, the Colonel told me about them. Good morning, Miss Demoville."

Helen selected the most private street for her walk home. She had proceeded only a few blocks when she saw a buggy approaching her. As it drew nearer, its occupant lifted his hat to her with a bow and a pleasant smile.

"That was Dr. Herndon," said Helen to herself, "and I am so sorry that he saw me walking and carrying this great bundle, for I have an idea that he is very aristocratic and particular about a lady's doing anything that seems eccentric. But I feel sure that this was my duty, and I must learn to be indifferent as to the opinion of the world when I am in the right path."

"I wonder why Miss Demoville was carrying that large bundle down this out-of-the-way street?" thought Dr. Herndon. "I have always considered her a very fine girl, and I never saw her do anything peculiar until to-day."

But when he reached Mrs. Lee's house the Doctor found that the whole family wanted to talk at once, and to tell him of the good fortune which had befallen them since his last visit, and the narration was liberally interspersed with the name of "Miss Helen."

"Do you mean Miss Demoville, whom I met down the street?" he inquired.



"Yes, sir. Isn't she lovely?"

"I am sure that I think so, and that is the opinion of all the young gentlemen who are acquainted with her." The Doctor's handsome face colored with embarrassment. "Is it her father's cottage into which you are going to move?"

"Yes, Doctor," replied Mrs. Lee, "and I promised her that I would ask you to let her know this afternoon whether you thought I would be able to stand the fatigue of being moved to-morrow, so that her father need not have the trouble of sending his drays if you do not think it would be advisable. Colonel Demoville offered to send a carriage for me."

"Well, Mrs. Lee," the Doctor replied after reflection, "I think it is so desirable that you should be domiciled in a better abode that I am willing to take the risk. Of course, there is a probability of your having a hemorrhage of the lungs from the effort, but I do not know that you would gain anything by waiting, as you are not likely to improve as long as you remain here. I will come at noon and accompany you, for fear it should make you worse."

"Thank you, Doctor. Shall Emma write a note to Miss Demoville now?"

"No, ma'am, I will do that at my office. I will be here promptly if to-morrow is a fair day. Good morning."



He sent the note by his office boy to Miss Demoville late in the afternoon. It was accompanied by a bouquet of violets and hyacinths.

In the drawing-room there was a basket of handsome flowers from the conservatory which had been presented to Helen by her father's bookkeeper, Edgar Lawrence. She left them on the center-table to wither when they would.

But these modest, yet sweeter, flowers met a happier fate, for they bloomed away their lives on Helen's bureau, and when they were faded, Mammy found them pressed in her scrap-book.

"Humph! 'Pears lak mer chile I done raise 'preciate de bo'quet de Doctor sont 'er," the old woman ejaculated. "I hope ter de Lawd dat we ain't er gwine ter lose 'er."



## CHAPTER V

### WHISPERINGS OF LOVE

"He loves not well whose love is bold;  
I would not have thee come too nigh;  
The sun's gold would not seem pure gold  
Unless the sun were in the sky;  
To take him hence and chain him near  
Would make his beauty disappear."

WILLIAM WINTER.

**E**ARLY the next morning Helen began her self-imposed task of stitching for Emma Lee.

"If any persons should call to-day, Uncle James, please tell them that I beg to be excused," she said to the stately old butler, a man who had served the Demoville family first as slave and then as freedman for nearly two generations.

"Miss Helen, aixcuse me," with a very low bow, "but has you forgotten, my young mis-t'ess, dat hit's your reception day?"

"No, Uncle James, I had not forgotten; but I have a piece of work which I am obliged to finish to-day."

"Cyarn't yer git some er de sewin' women ter do hit fer yer, marm?"

Helen shook her head.



"Den please, marm, let me say ye're gone out, 'not at home,' as de oder ladies says when I dribes yer roun' in der kerri'ge. Hit sounds more 'ristocratic."

"No, Uncle James, I do not want any stories told on my account. Don't you know it would be the same as telling a falsehood myself if I should let you tell one for me?"

"Ol' Mas'er ain't gwine ter mark down dem leetle w'ite lies 'g'ins' good Chris'yun people lak me an' you, Miss Helen. He gwine ter aixcuse us fer dem leetle slips er de tongue. I gwine ter do 'xac'ly lak you tells me, dough; but I know de ladies gwine ter look mighty quare w'en I steps ter de do' wid mer silber waiter an' mer w'ite gloves an' mer swaller-tail coat on an teks deir cyard an' ses, 'Mer young mist'ess baigs ter be aixcuse', madam,'" bowing low.

"I cannot help that, Uncle James; I must do what I am sure is my duty."

Stitch, stitch, stitch, went Helen's machine all day. She could hear the tinkle of the doorbell now and then, and the clatter of the horses' feet as the carriages drove up to the house and away, and she knew that she was missing the pleasure of seeing some of her best friends. She tried hard not to feel disappointed, but her eyes filled with tears when Uncle James brought up an invitation to an informal lunch to be given the next day at



one o'clock at the house of one of her school-mates, Lucy Curran.

"Dear me, how very pleasant it would be to go and meet all the members of our class! But I cannot finish this work in time, so I must write and decline."

When the answer reached the Currans' house, the disappointment it occasioned proved how popular the young girl was with them.

"I hope she is not becoming eccentric," snapped Mrs. Curran, having lost some of her natural amiability through her fatigue and anxiety to have the entertainment pass off as well as possible. 'Some work to finish for a poor girl,' when she puts out every stitch of her own sewing! What an idea!"

"But, mother, we do not know all of the circumstances," pleaded her gentle daughter. "I know it cost Helen a struggle to refuse our invitation. Helen Demoville is the noblest, most unselfish girl I have ever known."

"Yes, I do not doubt that, Lucy; yet, all the same, I am quite vexed that she will not come, for there is no one else who could add more to the enjoyment of our guests than she, with her beauty, her attractive manners, and her great musical talent and fine conversational powers. I am afraid that her absence will cast a gloom over the whole affair, for there is no one who can fill her place."



Late in the afternoon some one knocked at the door of Helen's room. It was Mammy, and her countenance wore a very troubled expression.

"Miss Helen, Jeems sont me ter tell yer dat dere's er pusson in de hall w'at wants ter see yer, an' wouldn't tek no aixcuse, an' 'e jes' had ter let 'em in."

"Is it a gentleman or a lady, Mammy?"

"'Taint nuther one, honey, hit's jest er pusson. She's es tall es yer par, an' es slim es er bean-pole, an' 'er clo'es don't tech 'er now'er's, an' dey's all sorts er colors lak der rainbow, an' she's got er leetle bit uv er head, an' er great big bunnit er settin' up dis er way," spreading out her bony hands over her ears.

"Oh, I think I know whom you mean, Mammy! Please ask her if her name is Mrs. Burns, and if she says that it is, you can bring her right up to my room. I would lose too much time in talking to her, or rather listening, if I should go down stairs."

In a few moments Mammy returned with the old woman following her.

"Mornin', ma'am; how d'ye feel ter-day? Gracious, ain't this er fine house! I've be'n in most er the best houses in town, but I hain't never seen air one that'll tech this un! Ther's arches here, an' arches there, until yer cain't sceercely fin' yer way erbout. I'd



be sho' ter git lost ef I lived in this big place; an' the stairs goes er windin' an' er windin' eroun' with the'r mahogany ballusters 'way up ter the ruf, an' all kivered with such thick carpet thet yer cain't hear yerse'f er walkin', an' the walls is all lineded with fine paper an' pictur's, an' here an' ther' er statoo er settin' on er table er in er nick in the wall, an' the c'andeliers jest er glitterin' with gildin' an' cut-glass dangles; an' I took er peep inter the parlor while I wus er waitin', an' I never seed so much finery in all mer born days; ther's mirro's an' lace curtings, an' plush sofies an' cheers an' pochays, an' these here tables es black es er nigger, an' er pi-anner, an' I ses ter merself, ses I, 'Whew! Ef I jes' had the money thet wus paid fer one er these bronzers, es they call 'em, hit'd feed me an' the ol' man fer er year!' That ol' nigger at the door didn' want ter let me set mer foot inside the house. When I pulled the bell he stuck 'is ol' nappy head out with 'is white gloves on, an' 'is silver waiter, an' 'is fine clothes an' 'is airs, an' 'e bowed hisse'f mos' down ter the flo', an' ses 'e, 'Miss 'Moville baig ter be aixcuse', madam'; an' then 'is head flew up erg'in, an' 'e seen me, an' 'e changed 'is tune quicker 'n lightnin', an' 'e ses, cross es er bear, 'De mist'ess er de house ain't et home ter-day'; an' I ses ter 'im, putty sharp, ses I, 'I'll have yer ter know, sar, thet I ain't no baiggar;



ef I wear t'other folks' clo'es they was gif ter me by some er the riches' ladies in this town; an' yer mist'ess is at home, sar, fer I heared the machine er tickin' es I comed erlong under 'er winder, an' I've come ter tell 'er somepin' 'ruther erbout one uv 'er frien's,' ses I, 'an' I'm sho' ef she knowed who hit wus, she'd see me, an' I'm not ergoin' ter move er peg f'om this door untel you let 'er know thet hit's me, an' then I'll give 'er the chainece er refusin',' ses I; an' then thet ol' Jiniwery let me go inter the hall so's ter get me out er the way er some ladies w'ut wus dressed es fine es er fiddle, an' wus er comin' ter call on yer in the'r kerige, an' w'en 'e'd turned them erway 'e come back an' 'tended ter me, an' hit turned out thet I wus right an' 'e wus wrong, ol' smart Aleck!"

She paused for a moment to catch her breath, and Helen said:

"Mrs. Burns, I suppose that you have come here to tell me something about the Lee family, have you not?"

"Yes, ma'am, I'm er comin' ter the p'int es fast es ever I kin," wheezing with an asthmatic cough. "The fus' thing this mornin' I run eroun' ther', es I giner'ly does, ter see how Miss Lee hed stood the night, an', bless yer life, they wus all tored up, an' er gwine ter move. I ast 'em wher' to, an' they tol' me, an' then I jest run eroun' ter Mr. Hob-



son's store an' tol' 'im erbout hit, an' I foun' out f'om him wher'bouts you lived, an' I jes' come here ter git you ter go an' see ef you cain't do somepin' 'ruther ter pervent hit."

"Prevent it, Mrs. Burns?" Helen stopped her sewing in amazement. "You cannot mean that you want me to interfere with Mrs. Lee's plan for improving her condition by moving to a house vastly superior to the hovel which she lives in now?"

"Yes, ma'am, thet's w'ut I mean, an' nothin' else. This new house is hainted, an' I've always heared thet ef yer moved inter one er them, ther's sho' ter be er death befo' the year is out."

"Mrs. Burns, it is more than probable that there will be a death in the Lee family before the year is out, for this is the early spring, and the life of the mother, as well as that of the little son, hangs by a very slender thread. Their moving to this 'haunted house' cannot hasten the death of either of them; on the contrary, it may be that their lives will be prolonged by making them more comfortable. Besides, my father told Mrs. Lee of these foolish rumors, and she said that she was not afraid to stay there. So you will oblige me greatly if you will do what you can to put an end to this idle gossip which has injured the property so much that no one



has been willing to rent it for more than a year."

"I'll try my level best, Miss 'Moville. Hit does seem silly fer grown-up people ter b'lieve them yarns 'bout ghostisses, lak er passel er child'en, an' I'm er gwine ter see ef I cain't put mer foot down on it, an' w'en Eleanor Ioly Peninty Piminty Burns puts 'er foot down, there's putty sho' ter be er rumblin' er the airth, es the sayin' goes. Don't yer want ter hear some er my hist'ry?"

Without waiting for a reply she continued:

"Burns ain't my fust husban'. He was a Moore, Clem Moore, an' he wus the greatest rider in all the lan', an' he was allers sure to win in ever' race he rid, an' ther' wus er feller name' Bill Williams thet'd make fight et Clem ever' time he'd win, an' Sheriff Cherry Berry ses ter Clem, 'Clem,' ses 'e, 'er great big feller lak you kin whup Bill Williams, an' the nex' time he makes fight et you, you jes' lick 'im, an' I'll back yer,' ses 'e. So the nex' time Clem run in er race, he won erg'in, an' Bill Williams had bet on t'other horse, so 'e follers the men inter the barroom wher' Clem hed tuck 'em ter treat a'ter he'd won the money, an' Bill, he walks up ter Clem an' he hits 'im with er stick, an' Clem, he grabs the stick an' knocks Bill down, an' he bites off 'is ear, an' he would er killed 'im ef they hadn't er tuck 'im off; an' Sheriff Cherry



Berry hollers out ter Clem, 'You'd better run, Clem, 'cause I'm er goin' ter git er warrant out fer yer in ten minutes'; an' Clem hollers back ter 'im, 'I'm er gwine ter have mer drink fust,' an' he taken it, an' jes' es Clem made er jump outen the barroom door, he seed Sheriff Cherry Berry er comin' tow' rds 'im with the warrant in 'is han', an' Clem bounces onter the nearest horse, which was Sheriff Cherry Berry's, an' he teks out 'is knife an' cuts the limb erloose wher' 'e wus tied, an' he rides away befo' three thousan' people, they er cheerin' an' er hollerin' for Clem; an' thet night he comes back an' teks his horse outen Sheriff Cherry Berry's stable, an' puts back hisn, an' swaps the saddles an' the blankets on the po'ch, an' then he rides erway an' stays twenty-two year, untel Bill Williams dies. I wus eighteen year ol' then, an' me an' Clem wus engage' ter be married. No, ma'am, I never was putty; I was ugly then lak you see me now, but I was peart an' handy about work, an' I had sev'al offers ter marry, but I loved Clem, an' I waited fer 'im. He writ me er letter ever' two week, an' I allers give my answer ter the mail rider, so's they couldn't fin' out wher' Clem wus an' have 'im 'rested. Fust he went ter Little Rock, Arkansaw, an' then he was in Texas; nex' he went ter Mexico, an' he fit through the Mexican War; then he went ter Bufferlo,



an' f'om ther' ter Californy, an' then he went inter the Corrihee Mountings."

"Where are the Corrihee Mountains, Mrs. Burns?"

"The Lord knows! No, hit warn't the Corrihee Mountings, hit wus the Alligator Mountings; an' then I writ 'im word thet Bill Williams wus dead, an' 'e come home, an' we wus married. Mother give us the biggest kind er weddin', an' ther' wus great rej'icin' 'mongst the neighbors, 'ca'se they admired my spunk erbout waitin' fer Clem f'om the time I was eighteen year old untel I was forty. Our little boy died w'en he wus er mont' ol', an' me an' Clem wusn't married mo' 'n three year befo' he got drowned in the lake."

The old woman paused a moment to wipe her eyes. Just then Mammy came into the room with a slip of paper in her hand.

"Miss Helen, yer par done sont up er load er wood, an' de nigger w'ut driv' de cyart say sign dis 'ere."

"Is it sawed, Miss 'Moville?" asked Mrs. Burns. "'Ca'se ef hit ain't, I wish you'd hire Burns ter saw it. He kin saw it es good es anybody, ef he's er mind ter; er lazy varmint, I has ter make 'im wo'k!"

"Yes, Mrs. Burns, you can send your husband to-morrow, and I will pay him a dollar



a cord and give him his dinner. How is the old man to-day?"

"Oh, he's all right; but me, I slipped down the steps yistiddy, an' I broke two er mer ribs, an' I jes' got up an' went ter the doctor's shop an' I got me some er this 'ere stickin' plaster an' stuck hit on, an' here I am. Ain't yer got some blankits ter wash, Miss 'Merville. I kin do 'em beautiful fer fifty cents er pa'r."

"Yes, ma'am. Mammy, will you bring those on the bed in the guest-room? All the others are in use at present. Mrs. Burns, would you mind taking this work home to Emma Lee as you go by there?"

"Yes, ma'am, I'll take it. I had no idee thet you wus er doin' all thet stitchin' fer er po' girl like her. Hit's mighty good er yer. Jes' put 'em inside er the blankits. I'll fetch 'em home es soon es ever I kin git 'em dry, an' don't you pay no money ter Burns; jes' save it an' han' it ter me, 'ca'se he'd be sho' ter drink hit up, an' we're too nigh starvin' fer thet. Good-by, an' I hope thet God'll bless ye," pressing Helen's delicate hand with her bony fingers.

"Mammy," said the kind young lady, "give her some ham and biscuit out of the safe."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mrs. Burns.



"Hit's be'n er many er day sence I've eat anything es good es that!"

Helen stitched diligently as long as she could see, stopping only to eat her dinner. Just as the gas was lighted and she was dressing for the evening, Mammy came to her room to say that Dr. Herndon was in the parlor and wished to see her for a few moments. There was nothing in this to disconcert a young lady who was generally so self-possessed as Helen, yet she could feel her heart go pit-a-pat all the way down the stairs.

"Good evening, Miss Demoville." The Doctor remained standing until the young lady was seated.

"I am glad to see you, Doctor," Helen replied as they shook hands. "Won't you take this arm-chair? Allow me to thank you for these beautiful flowers." She laid her hand on the bouquet she had fastened in her dress.

"They are hardly worthy of thanks, for they are but a poor offering at the shrine of Beauty." Helen's color increased visibly. "But I had observed that you seemed to love hyacinths and violets. Now these," touching the handsome basket on the table, "bear a greater resemblance to their fair young owner."

"Do not speak of them." Helen made a gesture of dismissal. "I wish that they



had not been sent. But I am afraid that I am transgressing the conventionalities of society in speaking so freely of an absent person."

"I do not think so, Miss Demoville." The Doctor's expressive countenance glowed with enthusiasm. "There is no trait that I admire more than candor, and your speaking to me in this unreserved manner makes me feel as if you considered me as one of your friends."

"I do." Her tone indicated deep feeling.

"I thank you, Miss Helen, for I consider your friendship as a treasure that I can never appreciate too highly. I hope that I may live and die in the possession of the esteem of every one who is as pure and lovely as you are."

There was a short pause and then he resumed:

"But I am in danger of forgetting the object of my visit. I came at the request of my patient, Mrs. Lee, to say to you that she stood the excitement of the moving quite well, and she has felt no bad effects from it yet. She seems delighted with her new home, and says that she hopes to derive benefit from the change of air and surroundings. She begs that you will call again at your earliest convenience, for she thinks that your visits do her more good than my medicine."

"So we are rival practitioners, are we?"



said Helen, laughing. "I will go there to-morrow; but you must not grow jealous of me."

"I can promise you that in good faith, Miss Helen." Dr. Herndon's fine features were illuminated by a benevolent smile. "In fact, I am so anxious to have Mrs. Lee's health improve that there is nothing that I would not do to accomplish this object. I have been attending her for the past year, and during that time I have read and studied all the medical works I could find that had any bearing on the case, and I have consulted all the older physicians of the place. Dr. Vivian, who is an eminent specialist in pulmonary diseases, has gone with me to see her several times, and he and they concur in the opinion that she cannot live a great while longer, that medicine can only alleviate her pain, and that little can be done for her save to make the few months remaining to her as pleasant as possible. She is so lady-like and refined that I have taken the deepest interest in her, and I would be willing to give up my chosen profession without a murmur if Mrs. Lee might thereby be restored to health. You see, Miss Helen, I have not been a physician long enough to become inured to the sight of suffering. Perhaps in the course of time I shall become accustomed to it, as the more experienced doctors seem to be,



and then I shall not feel it so deeply as at present."

"I admire your sympathy and kindness of heart more than I can express to you, Dr. Herndon." Helen spoke quickly and impulsively. "For the sake of your patients, I hope that you will never lose them."

"Thank you. For their sakes, it may be better that I should suffer with them, yet it is unfortunate when a physician has an excess of feeling, for then this going from one sick person to another and suffering at each visit becomes extremely depressing to a man's spirits, and it almost supplies him with an excuse for plunging into dissipation in order to dispel the shadows that pursue him wherever he goes."

Helen gave a little shudder.

"There is no danger of such a catastrophe in your case, is there, Doctor?"

"I hope not," he said earnestly.

"And I pray not," she said solemnly.

"Thank you, my dear friend, for your deep interest in me. I am now a man of twenty-five years, and I can say with truth that I have never been intoxicated. I do not think that I deserve any credit for my abstinence. I have often felt strongly tempted to indulge in dissipation while in the company of my young companions, and I believe that I might have yielded but for the thought of the pain it



would give my mother. I love her, Miss Helen, better than my life." His dark gray eyes became beautiful with their tender expression. "As long as she lives I do not fear that I can keep in the right path. By the way, will you not waive ceremony and call to see her? I think that she would be as greatly charmed with your society as myself, and I am so anxious for her to have every enjoyment possible. She would call on you, but her health is so poor that she has given up visiting for the past few years, and my sister's whole time is occupied in attending to her comfort, for she is as devoted to our mother as I am."

"Thank you, Doctor, it will give me pleasure to call. Whom shall I ask to introduce us?"

"Can you not go alone, Miss Helen? Perhaps, in my turn, I am growing too candid; but I want my mother to have an opportunity of judging of your character."

"I will do as you wish, Dr. Herndon."

"Thank you. Do you know that I think you would make the best and sweetest little wife in the world, and just the kind that a physician ought to have? But forgive me, dear Miss Helen, for I have not the right to speak thus to a young lady, for my life must be devoted to the support of my mother and my sister, unless Fortune smiles on me; and



until it does I must not offer my heart and my hand to her whom I love with my whole being."

He pressed her hand to his lips. There was an expression of intense devotion in his eyes, and he looked as if he would like to say more; but, with a sigh of repression, he left the room.

Helen sat like one dazed for a few moments, then her heart found relief in a flood of tears.



## CHAPTER VI

### TO THE RESCUE

"Oh, there be men and women who ne'er owned  
Of thy full-measured blessings even a tithe;  
Whose natural wants, health, money, friends, denied,  
Might well have sapped the core of sweet content,  
And caused them pine and fret and weep for change,  
Who yet go almost singing on their way;  
Such music patience makes in great, meek souls."

MRS. JANE C. SIMPSON.

THE love which Helen Demoville had waited and hoped for since her early girlhood had come to her at last. Her lovers had often reproached her because their most earnest protestations of devotion had awakened no response in her heart; yet she had not despaired, for she felt that when she met a man possessing virtues commanding both her admiration and respect, her love would be aroused in all its intensity.

It had happened just as she thought; and yet the circumstances were far different from those she had imagined. She had never imagined that there would have to be weary years of waiting for the consummation of her happiness. She had always pictured a brief, ardent wooing, a short en-



gagement, an elaborate *trousseau*, a stylish wedding, followed by a delightful tour in foreign lands, and then the settling down to housekeeping in the style to which she had been accustomed in her father's house.

How different was the reality! She did not mind the prospect of the surrender of all luxuries, for her happiness had never been dependent upon such trivialities, and she knew that her love for Arthur Herndon was strong enough to enable her to stand every hardship which poverty could inflict. If the customs of society and her own innate modesty had not forbidden, she could have called the Doctor back as he left the house, and told him that she was willing to share his fortunes for time and for eternity.

Yet even if she could have made such an appeal, she knew that Dr. Herndon was a man of too much principle and stability of character to desert voluntarily the duty God had imposed upon him of supporting his dear mother and sister; and if he married while his income was so limited that would be no longer possible.

"As we love each other, for either of us to wed another would be sacrilege. Will it be possible for the Doctor to improve his fortune by hard work? I fear not, for there are so many at the head of the profession that there is little chance for men to succeed until



they have grown gray in the service of the public, and even then they are often overshadowed by the less deserving but more fortunate candidates for favor. Shall I tell papa of my newly found happiness? I have never kept even a thought from him, and yet I must not speak of this to him, because the secret is that of another person, and it was only disclosed by the intensity of Arthur's feelings, for he said he had no right, under the circumstances, to speak, even to me, of his devotion. Shall we have to wait twenty-two years, as that poor creature said she did this morning? Dear me! my age will be doubled then, and Arthur will be forty-seven. My cheeks would be no longer plump and rosy, but the wrinkles would be gathering at the corners of my mouth and my eyes, my hair would be thin and perhaps sprinkled with gray, and my teeth might be broken or replaced with artificial ones. Oh, the sweetness of my cup of happiness is so mingled with gall!"

She threw herself down upon the sofa and wept bitterly. At last she succeeded in controlling her grief.

"Papa will be at home in a few moments, and I must not distress him with the sight of my tears."

She went to her room and bathed and powdered her face. Then she knelt down and



begged God to help her to keep from grieving her father with her sorrow. She took some of Emma Lee's work to finish off by hand, and she was seated by the dining-room fire sewing when Colonel Demoville returned from his office.

She rose and gave him a kiss as he entered the room.

"Papa, Dr. Herndon called this evening to say that Mrs. Lee had moved to your house, and that she had suffered no ill effects from it, and she said she felt as if the change might benefit her."

"I am glad to hear it, Helen. So Herndon is attending her, is he? She could not be in better hands. His father was an eminent physician, but in 1870 he fell a victim to that terrible epidemic of yellow fever. He practiced with the disease on him, as long as he could keep upon his feet, and he died a few hours after they put him to bed. His death was lamented by the whole community. With his large practice he ought to have made a fortune, but much of it was done for the sake of charity. A great many of the accounts on his book could not be collected, and when the estate was settled there was little left for the widow and her two young children. I heard she had difficulty in making her scant fortune hold out to support them and to educate her son for his father's profes-



sion. This young man, they say, has inherited the old Doctor's talent for medicine. In fact, he took first honors in the class of forty students of which he was a member, thereby securing the position of resident physician at the City Hospital. The rules forbid a second appointment, so when Herndon's term was out some friends of his father managed to secure his election as County Physician, and he has held the office for several years. His duties are to visit the County Poorhouse, and to attend those patients who are unable to pay a doctor. There is a small salary attached to the office, but I should think it would take every cent he makes to support the family. Herndon is quite popular among the young men, but there is very little money in anything outside of family practice, and that is reserved for the married men of the profession."

"Papa, Dr. Herndon invited me to call on his mother, as she has been an invalid for several years. Have you any objection to my accepting the invitation?"

"None whatever, Helen. Mrs. Herndon was a dear friend of your mother. She is a very refined, cultivated lady, and I am certain that you could derive great benefit from your association with her. She was a Miss Gregory, and she was a member of one of the most aristocratic families in South Caro-



lina. I should be delighted to have you visit such an elegant lady. Her son is a very honorable man, and generous to a fault. In fact, he is the facsimile of his father in disposition. He would make an excellent husband for some girl, but his poverty will make marriage out of the question for him for many years. Most men would cut the Gordian knot by addressing a lady possessing considerable property in her own right; but Arthur Herndon is too proud to be willing to feel under obligations to any one for even a portion of his support; so I prophesy that he will remain a bachelor until the end of the chapter. Is it not hard, daughter, when he could make his wife so happy? For he would be gentle and affectionate, and as true to her as the needle to the pole."

"It is indeed hard, papa," assented Helen, and for a moment she wished he could know her feelings on this subject, without her telling him; but she thought:

"What good would it do to distress him? He could give me no assistance in this matter, so it is best that I should try to bear it alone. I have not the comfort of an engagement, even though an apparently interminable one, nor that of expressing my feelings to my lover or any chosen confidante, for I must keep them locked closely in my heart."

Her eyes filled with hot tears, and they



were almost ready to fall on her sewing, when she heard the faint tinkle of the doorbell, and she summoned all her self-control. In a few moments the old butler brought her a card which read:

MR. AUGUSTUS VAN HOOSE,  
New York City.

"He is that blond dude who always spends his winters in our city," she said as she passed the bit of pasteboard to her father and smoothed her bangs with her hands. "It would be a thousand times more agreeable to me to spend the evening with you, papa, and finish off this work, than to entertain this figurehead of a man. Yet it is one of the inexorable laws of society that a young lady must make herself pleasant to all the gentlemen who honor her by seeking her company."

She entered the parlor gracefully, and for several hours there was an interchange of elegant trivialities between her guest and herself. At last, when the bronze clock on the mantel sounded eleven silvery chimes, the young gentleman went away, and Helen gave a sigh of relief.

"Last week all this would have interested and amused me, but to-night it has only bored me. I am afraid that I am going to lose my taste for society, which would be a great pity,



for I will have to retain my place in it until I am old enough to retire."

She took up her album of photographs and turned to that of Dr. Herndon.

"His features never before looked so noble," she thought. "I am glad I gave him my picture to show his mother, for it may be as great a comfort to him as this is to me. I must take it out of this book and put it into my bureau drawer where I can look at it whenever I wish."

She gazed at the picture long and earnestly before she retired. Perhaps that was the reason that she dreamed of the original. She awoke with a start at an hour later than usual, and passing her hand over her curly bangs, she recalled the visions of the night.

"Oh, I thought Arthur and I were engaged, and now I realize that it is not so. Yet how intensely happy it made me!"

She sprang up and took another look at her precious photograph. Just then there was a rap at her door. She thrust the picture hastily back into its hiding-place.

"Come in, Mammy."

"Mornin', honey. Dey's er quare lookin' ol' man down sta'rs ses Miss Bu'ns sont 'im ter cut de wood."

"Well, Mammy, you can give him some breakfast and put him to work. I will see him as soon as papa has gone."



When Helen went out into the yard she saw the old man sawing away, with a corncob pipe in his mouth.

"Good morning, Mr. Burns. How is your wife?"

"Oh, she's all right, be jabbers; but I fell down yis'erd'y, and I broke two er mer ribs,—och, how it hurts!—an' I jis' wint ter de doctor-shop an' got er piece er dis yere stickin' plas'er, an' I clapped hit on jis' so, an' I got up this mornin' an' come on ter mer wo'k, like er good b'y. Won't yer give me er drink fer it, please marm?"

Helen shook her head. Mammy, who was passing by, clapped her hand over her mouth, and ran into the kitchen. The young lady followed her and found her rolling on the floor and screaming with laughter.

"What's the matter, Mammy?"

"The ol' man tellin' de same tale the ol' 'oman tol', an' 'taint so 'bout 'nother one," Mammy replied, as soon as she could speak. "Don't you know, honey, ef ol' folks lak them break dey bones dey cyarn't move fer t'ree week at de inside? Hit's er lie, an' er big un at dat."

"Course, chile," assented the cook and the butler, who were eating breakfast. "Dat's all po' w'ite trash is fitten fer, ter tell lies," added old James, with his mouth full of hot buckwheat cake. "Ef I wus er rich w'ite



man I'd set mer dog on de bery fus' one whut try ter put 'is foot on my place," stirring up the sugar at the bottom of his cup of strong coffee.

"Den de Lord done jes' right w'en He made yer er po' nigger," growled Venus, the fat black cook. "Ef de rich folks didn't he'p 'em, some er dese 'ere baiggars 'd starve sho' es de gorspel, an' dat 'd be dre'ful."

"Let 'em wo'k same es me," snapped James, cutting up his steak.

"Dey cyarn't allers git de wo'k ter do, yer ol' fool!" retorted the cook, determined to have the last word.

Stitch, stitch, stitch, went Helen's machine all the morning, and by unflagging diligence she finished the last piece of work by two o'clock. Then she made a search for some car tickets with which to ride out to Mrs. Lee's house.

"They are all gone," she said. "It seems that whenever your money gives out, everything else does so at the same time. I wonder if Mammy would lend me a dime? I have never borrowed any money from her, but working so hard has made me too tired to walk out there and back in time for dinner, without running the risk of getting sick."

She found the old woman sitting by a fire in her own room smoking her pipe.

"Come right in, honey, an' don't shet de



do'. I lef' hit open er purpose, 'ca'se I'm jes' erbleeged ter keep mer eye on dat lazy ol' no-'count w'ite man; he won't wo'k er lick 'dout 'e know somebordy watchin' 'im."

"But I hired him by the job, Mammy, not by the day."

"Meks no diff'ence, chile. He'll spin hit out inter er week so's ter git y'all's good grub all dat time. Honey, you don't know de tricks er dese 'ere po' w'ite buckra. Dey wus' 'n er mule."

"Mammy, I am going out to Mrs. Lee's to carry this work. If papa should come home before I do, please give him his dinner and tell him that I shall be back soon."

"W'y don't yer mek Jeems cyar' yer in de kerri'ge? Dem horses is jis' er eatin' dey heads off in de stable, an' you ain't tuck er ride dese t'ree er fo' days."

"I would rather go on the car, because Uncle James would have to hurry back to set the table for dinner. Will you please lend me a dime, Mammy?"

"De idee of er young lady er yo' 's'ability borrh'in' f'om er po' nigger lak me! Not dat Mammy begrudge it ter yer, honey, 'ca'se I spec's ter leab yer all I got in de freedman's bank w'en Ol' Mas'er sen' de angel ter tote me home."

She ripped open a pillow on her bed, and



took out a stocking half filled with gold and silver coins.

"Jes' run yer han' in, chile, an' tek out w'ut yer wants."

"Thank you, Mammy, a dime is all I want. You ought not to keep so much money about you. Somebody might slip in at night and rob and murder you."

"Dey ain't gwine ter know it 'dout you tell 'em, an' Mammy ain't skeered er her chile. 'Sides, I gwine ter put hit in de bank w'en it gits up ter 'ere," touching a stripe on the upper part of the stocking.

Helen found the Lees in high spirits. They were delighted with their new home, and had received a visit from Dr. Markham, the minister.

"He has such charming manners," said Mrs. Lee; "I felt as if I had known him all my life."

"Yes, he has great magnetism," assented Helen. "It is wonderful how he attracts the children. Did Mrs. Burns bring you the bundle of sewing yesterday?"

"Yes, Miss Helen, and I am so much obliged to you. The old lady is a queer customer, is she not?"

"Indeed, she is, and I doubt whether she always tells the truth."



Helen told them of the broken ribs, and they laughed heartily.

"Yes, she makes a large draft upon her imagination," said Mrs. Lee. "She would have made a gifted novelist; yet she is very kind and generous. She rules her husband, but he is a perfect baby, and it is necessary that she should. One day while she was out he ran away from home and went to the hospital. Mrs. Burns grieved as if she had been devoted to him. In a few days he returned, and said that he could not stand the fare. My children considered that a very good joke, for we know that it is only on rare occasions that they have anything to eat except Irish potatoes roasted in the ashes, and often not even salt to eat with them. It takes all the old lady can make to pay the house-rent."

"I must get Dr. Markham to look after them. There is a fund for that purpose. Now, Emma, I have brought my tools," taking them from the inside of the bundle of work, "and I thought maybe I could help you to fix your machine, as I often do my own. Perhaps the screws need tightening."

Half an hour's work put the machine into excellent order.

"I should say you were smart," said Herbert, looking at her with admiring eyes; "and just to think, I did not know you could do anything but teach Sunday-school and sing! Oh,



mamma, how I wish that you and Emma could hear her! ”

“ Will you not sing for me? ” The invalid’s eyes pleaded so earnestly for her that Helen sang, without further persuasion, all the beautiful hymns of which she could think, watching Mrs. Lee’s expression of delight as she sang.

“ Language cannot express my thanks to you, Miss Helen. I can only ask you to sing to me always when you come, and I should like to have you sing ‘ Jerusalem the golden ’ and ‘ Hark, hark, my soul, ’ when the time comes for me to die. ”

“ I will, Mrs. Lee, ” Helen promised solemnly; “ but I hope that time is far away. ”

“ I do not think it can be very far, Miss Helen. When a person gets beyond the reach of the help of medicine you may know that life is nearly over for her. Last evening I lay here and watched the beautiful sunset, and I thought that just as surely as it would rise again on the morrow, so would my soul rise from the dead and rejoice in the presence of its Maker. Death has no sting for me, Miss Helen. I leave my children to the care of their Heavenly Father, trusting that He will provide for them. I have only one earthly wish now, and that is to be reconciled to my father. ”



"Papa wrote the letter for you, Mrs. Lee, but it will be some weeks before he can get a reply. Now I must say good-by, for it is nearly our dinner hour. I will come again very soon."

On the way to the car she passed a house where the Wades and Rosses lived.

"I wonder if they would not take an interest in the Lees," she thought. "They are poor themselves, but I do not know of any one who does more for charity than these ladies, and they are fine hands at soliciting from their rich friends."

She walked through the pretty, old garden, and rang the bell. The house belonged to the Ross family, but, like the Apostles, they "had all things in common" with their friends the Wades.

Miss Lucy Wade opened the door herself.

"Good morning, Miss Lucy. I know you are always busy, so I will state the object of my visit at once. I called to see you in behalf of an invalid lady, Mrs. Lee, who lives near you. I wish you would go to see her. The doctor says she needs pleasant company."

"Oh, yes, I know her, and Nettie Ross and I went there yesterday afternoon, and the house was shut up, and we could not find out where the family had moved."

"Well, I can tell you. Do you know where that cottage of my father's is, on Pine and Magnolia streets?"



"Do you mean 'the haunted house,' as the neighbors call it?"

"Yes," with a pleasant smile. "Well, papa has let them go there to live without paying rent, because he knew Mrs. Lee long ago in England. They seem to be in very destitute circumstances, although their wants are provided for at present. Still, there is a dreadful prospect before them unless something is done for them very soon."

"I judged so from appearances, although I could never induce Mrs. Lee to make a complaint. Emma sews very well indeed, and Nettie and I could throw some work into her hands, for we often get more than we can do, and there is another way in which we could assist them. My class in embroidery started to make a crazy quilt last week without having any particular object in view, and it could be devoted to this purpose. Can you dispose of it when it is finished?"

"Yes, I think Mr. Hammond would raffle it for me at his dry-goods store."

"Could you get some scraps of silk and velvet from your friends?"

"I am sure that I could get a large number."

"I will teach Herbert how to join the squares. It may divert his mind from his pain, and persons will take more interest in the quilt if it is known that a sick boy did a part of the work. I have a friend who is in



the printing business, so I can get the tickets struck off for nothing. How many shall we have, and what shall we ask for them?"

"Suppose we have fifty chances at half a dollar each? It will be easier to sell them if the price is low, and the money would be a great help to the family if they could receive it very soon."

"I agree with you, Helen. You have a great many friends among the young ladies. Do many of them embroider well?"

"I think nearly all of them do, Miss Lucy."

"Suppose you get a number of them to come out here next Saturday and work all the morning on this quilt. In a few hours they could accomplish so much."

"That is a capital idea, Miss Lucy. You may look for us at ten o'clock."

"Why could you not get up an entertainment for the benefit of the Lee family?"

"I think we could do so very easily, Miss Lucy. We can talk it over on Saturday. You have such a noble heart, and as to your head, if you had been a man I am sure that you would have been a major-general in the army."

"Perhaps the poor might have not fared so well if I were not a woman," said Miss Lucy with a sweet smile. "I shall expect you on Saturday. Good-by."



## CHAPTER VII

### IN THE PATH OF DUTY

"It is a little thing to speak a phrase  
Of common comfort which by daily use  
Has almost lost its sense; yet on the ear  
Of him who thought to die unmourned 'twill fall  
Like choicest music, fill the glazing eye  
With gentle tears, relax the knotted hand  
To know the bonds of fellowship again,  
And shed on the departing soul a sense  
More precious than the benison of friends  
About the honored death-bed of the rich."

THOMAS NOON TALFOURD.

**F**OR the next few days much of Helen's time was spent in drumming up recruits to work on the quilt the following Saturday. She was astonished at her success, which she had not enough vanity to attribute to her own powers of attraction.

"After all, there is a great deal of good in human nature, especially among girls," she thought, when twenty of her friends had given her their promise to assist in the undertaking. "Now several of these young ladies acknowledge openly that they have never done anything for the sake of charity; yet they enter into this with enthusiasm. If there were only more persons like Miss Lucy Wade to direct



us and to take the lead in deeds of benevolence, how much better the world would grow."

She did not think that she deserved any of the credit. Her only thought about herself was a wonder that she could be so happy once more, after being so miserable a few nights before, when she had feared that her sorrow would last as long as her life.

"Doing good to others is the true source of happiness," she thought. "This experience will teach me a lesson that I hope that I shall never forget."

Yet Helen was aware that her motives in helping the Lees were not unmixed with a desire to please Dr. Herndon.

"I love him devotedly," she said to herself, "and this is the only thing that I can do for him, except to call occasionally on his mother, for I know that it wouldn't do for me to go there frequently, or at the hours when the Doctor might be at home."

Saturday morning was bright and beautiful, and the girls met by appointment at Colonel Demoville's house.

"It is pretty early in the season for a picnic," thought the driver as the twenty lively, chattering young ladies stepped into his car; "but maybe they belong to a class in botany, and are going out to Forest Park to gather specimens. But they don't seem to have any



baskets of lunch, which doesn't seem natural, for girls are nearly always hungry; and where are the beaux? You can't count on girls, though, for they are always starting some new fashion, and I have noticed that they delight in snubbing the men until they get to be about twenty-five, and then, great Scott! how they change their tune!"

The mystery was solved when the bell was rung at the corner of the street which led to Miss Wade's house, and the bevy of young ladies walked off in that direction, chattering like blackbirds.

"Dear me, what a clatter!" said Miss Lucy, putting her hands over her ears in mock displeasure, as they entered her exquisitely neat sewing-room. "Now, I am not going to ask you to keep still while you are embroidering, although you would do better work if you did; but so many of you have been my pupils that I know that it is out of the question. But I want to propose the topic of conversation this morning and I hope we will accomplish something by a serious discussion of a very important subject."

Some of the fair foreheads were slightly puckered at the word "serious," but the cloud was lifted from them when they knew what the "subject" was.

"Helen Demoville and I propose to get up an entertainment of some kind for the benefit



of a very deserving family," said Miss Lucy, as the girls stitched figures nearly as beautiful as themselves on the bright scraps of silk and velvet they had brought with them. "If I did not think it might do her harm, I should like to take you to see the mother, a refined and cultivated lady, whose life is wasting away with consumption. The little son, Herbert Lee, many of you have seen limping along on his crutches to Sunday-school; but there are often months when he is too sick to go, when he is confined to his bed, and suffers agony, even losing pieces of his bones from the acuteness of his disease, white swelling. Besides these, there is only a frail girl, younger than most of you, who does what she can with her needle to prevent these loved ones and herself from starving. Girls, are you willing to assist her?"

They promised, and some of the more emotional ones pressed their handkerchiefs to their moistened eyes.

"This quilt which you are kindly helping me to make is for the benefit of the Lees, and I hope you will try to get the chances for it taken. As soon as it is completed, we are going to have it raffled at Mr. Hammond's store. Did he say he would do it, Helen?" Receiving an affirmative reply, she continued: "We have put the chances at a low price, fifty cents each, and I will have the tickets ready for



distribution for sale among you as soon as the quilt is ready for exhibition. We will have only fifty chances, so that the raffle may come off soon, and the Lees receive the money, which they need badly. But this twenty-five dollars will not go a great way in providing for a family in which there are two invalids, so we must do something else.

“Now, if everybody was as good as they should be, we could go to a hundred or so of our rich friends and tell them of the destitution of this family, and, without being asked, they would make such liberal donations that there would be ample means provided to support the Lees for at least a year. But human nature is so selfish that persons have grown accustomed to expect something in return for what they give, even for charity. So we must follow the fashion set us for so many years, and amuse them in some way for the money they will give us. But I look at it in this way: those who attend the entertainment will get the value of their entrance fee, and those who assist in getting up the exhibition will be the real donors, for they will give their services without money and without price! Now, I have preached my sermon to you, and I will leave you to decide what kind of an entertainment you will have, for, not being a woman of fashion, I am not *au fait* in such matters as you are.”



Miss Lucy left the room to allow the girls more freedom in their discussion.

"I propose tableaux and charades," said Lucy Travis, in a timid little voice.

"Too old-fashioned and quiet," replied Nellie Hunter. "I would prefer a charity ball at Temperance Hall."

"That would keep out all the people who do not dance, and there are so many balls given by our mystic societies that there would be no novelty in that," said Fannie Harrison. "For my part, I would prefer a theatrical entertainment."

"Why not an opera?" asked Helen Demoville, speaking for the first time. "Almost every one is partial to good singing and acting combined, and we have so much musical talent in our little city, especially in our church choirs."

"The very idea," assented a dozen voices.

"I could get the theatre rent free, for my father is the executor of the estate that owns it," said Daisy Irby.

"Father would not charge anything for the gas," said Hattie Orton.

"My father would furnish carriages for the performers," said Mary Ewing.

"And mine would give it advance puffs in his newspaper and print the tickets for us," said Jennie Craighead.

"Why, at that rate our expenses would be



very light, and what we made would be almost clear," exclaimed Helen. "Let's see, that leaves nothing but the orchestra. We must see what they would charge."

"You can leave that little item to me," said Emma Brooks, smiling. "Our family have taken lessons from the leader, Professor Herwig, for a long time, and if I go about it right, and get his sympathy for the Lees aroused, I think he can get the musicians to volunteer for this occasion."

"I hope you will be successful, Emma," said Helen. "Now, as to our powers of attraction; do you think we could draw a large house?" Her face wore a comical expression.

"Of course," chimed several voices. "How could such an array of beauty, talent, and fashion fail to attract a crowd? Look how a wedding fills a church, and this would be equal to at least a dozen weddings."

"What opera would you suggest, girls?" asked Helen.

"'Martha' is the purest, prettiest and most popular one that we can think of," agreed those who were better versed in musical matters.

"Your voice is so good, Helen, that the part of Lady Harriet would suit you to perfection," said Laura Houston.

"I? Oh, Laura, you are so much better



fitted for that than I am, for you acted it once in New Orleans, and I heard that you had honors showered upon you," replied Helen.

"For that reason, I should be willing to retire upon the laurels that I have won."

"Yes, but the practice you had then would be more apt to make the opera a success, and that is what we are working for, and not for individual glory."

"That is true, Helen. Well, suppose we both study the part; I will give you the benefit of any experience that I may have gained; and then we can draw straws to decide which of us shall be the prima donna at the public performance."

"I will agree to that plan," said Helen.

"Who ever heard of such an amicable arrangement between rival singers?" asked Emma Brooks.

"Rivals? We never thought of such a thing, did we, Laura?" said Helen. "Why, we are the best of friends, aren't we?" and they embraced in school-girl fashion.

"Emma, you are so lively, you ought to act Nancy. Are you willing to do so?"

"Certainly I am, and let us have old Mr. George Werner for Lord Tristram."

"We must invite Mr. Robert Gibson and Mr. Wallace Taylor to take the characters of Lionel and Plunkett. Their voices would



accord so well in that duet, 'Lost, proscribed, a friendless pilgrim.' "

"That is a very good suggestion, Helen," assented Laura; "they sang that air in the choir of our church last Sunday to the words of the hymn which begins 'Guide me, O thou great Jehovah'; and every one seemed to consider it quite a musical treat."

"Just see how smart we have been, selecting our choice and distributing the cast of characters, and making all the arrangements for an opera, and it is just twelve o'clock," said Emma Brooks. "But my extraordinary mental efforts have made me ravenously hungry, and I propose that we adjourn this meeting and go to our respective homes to lunch."

"Wouldn't you all stay longer if you had some refreshments?" asked Helen. "You see, girls, we could accomplish so much on the quilt if we could stay here until four o'clock."

"We wouldn't mind staying, if our hunger was appeased, but it would not be right to impose the feeding of this multitude on Miss Lucy Wade," said Emma, "and you have no fairy wand, Helen Demoville, with which you can produce sandwiches and caramels."

"No, but I know a store near here where I can get some things we can eat, and Miss



Lucy will lend us her table, I know. Will you come with me, Laura?"

"Certainly, but have you enough money?"

"My credit is good there. The store-keeper knows me."

"Oh, that will not do at all." A dozen purses flew open and a liberal sum was provided.

Helen and Laura soon returned with their packages, set the table, and Miss Lucy brought them in a large pitcher of buttermilk, which was very refreshing.

"I declare, it is better than a picnic," said Emma Brooks; "and just to think, we are doing good, too!"

After luncheon their fingers flew over their embroidery, and their tongues kept time planning the dresses they should wear and many other details.

"Oh, won't it be grand when one of us comes out and holds a rose in her hand and sings:

"'Tis the last rose of summer?"

"That always brings such a round of applause. I wonder 'which shall it be, dear girl, which shall it be?'" said Laura Houston.

"Time and the straws will tell," laughed Helen. "For my part, I would rather be in the audience and listen to your sweet voice, Laura. But do not let us decide the matter



until the evening of the last rehearsal. We can invite some of our intimate friends to be present, so as to give us courage for the next night, and we can both come to the theatre dressed for the part, and some gentleman can hold the straws, and we will draw before the audience, and then the curtain will rise and the performance begin."

"Agreed. Who shall the gentleman be? We had better settle everything while we are together. Propose some one, Helen."

"How would Dr. Herndon do? He is Mrs. Lee's physician, and he seems to take a great deal of interest in the family."

"Very well, indeed. He is nice, and so handsome that he would add to the picturesqueness of the scene."

"Now everything is arranged, and we have not disagreed on a single subject. Aren't we a harmonious family of kittens?" said Emma Brooks.

When they were ready to leave, Miss Lucy came in and overlooked the work they had done.

"It is beautiful!" she said, examining it. "I am glad to see that you have remembered so well the instructions that I used to give you. See here,"—she laid the squares on the table,—“with the addition of those my class will do at their next meeting, I will have enough to complete the quilt. Nettie Ross



and I will do most of the joining, and we will let Herbert Lee assist us a little, and the quilt will be finished in less than ten days. Then we are going to send it to you, Helen Demoville, to raffle."

The merry party dispersed, much pleased with the thought of the good they had accomplished; and with several of them the day marked the beginning of a career of usefulness which lasted as long as they lived.

Helen was gratified the next morning to see the great interest her Sunday-school class took in Herbert Lee. They seemed to have been thinking of the boy all the week. One little fellow gave him a collection of beautiful story books. Another volunteered to go and read them to him whenever he was too sick to leave his bed.

"Miss Helen, mamma said I could give Herbert my goat wagon. I'm so large now I can't ride in it any more," said Tommy Jackson, trying to look as tall as possible.

"I can give him a tip-top goat. I've got two, and this one don't eat anything but grass and brown paper, so it won't cost Herbert anything to feed him," said Willie Jemison.

"My goat's dead, and I sold my wagon," said Henry Johnston, "but I can give him my harness, and then he can just sail around the block. Won't it be jolly?"

It was a pleasure to look at Herbert's face



and watch its radiant expression while this was going on, and to hear his hearty thanks to his classmates.

"I can ride as much as I please when I get my goat wagon," he said with sparkling eyes. "Dr. Herndon says the fresh air is good for me, and he takes me with him in his buggy every fair day when he goes out to the poorhouse, and it does me so much good. Oh, boys, you don't know how nice it is out there! There is a great big yard to play in, with large oak trees to shade it, and a flower garden, and an orchard, with all kinds of fruit, and a scuppernong grape arbor as long as this church; and they live well there all the time, plenty of nice bread and molasses and soup and vegetables and everything you can think of; and every Thanksgiving Day and Christmas and New Year's one of the colored preachers goes around to all the gentlemen in town, and they give him money and provisions, and the people at the poorhouse have the biggest kind of a dinner those three days—turkey and cranberries and oysters and ham and oranges and apples and raisins and nuts and everything else you can think of. I have been there and eaten with them, and that's the way I know."

"I wish I lived at the poorhouse them days," said Joe Jefferson, a shabbily dressed, pinched-up-looking little fellow.



"The keeper and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Parsons, are such good people, and their daughter, Miss Eliza, is almost as pretty as you are, Miss Helen, and she makes a perfect pet of me, and always saves something good for me to eat. I tell you, boys, if my mother and my sister were to die, and I had to go somewhere, I would rather go there than anywhere else."

"So would I," said Tommy Jackson. "I've rode out there with my Uncle Evan when he went hunting, and it's just elegant, there, and they treat them all splendid."

"It's a heap better than the orphan asylum, I can tell you," said Joe Jefferson. "They put me there once, and it was er awful place. They didn't give you half enough ter eat, and they wasn't nobody hardly ter tend ter yer clothes, so you had ter go ragged when they warn't no company 'round, and the old matron was awful spiteful; the boys said she drank; and she'd beat a feller jus' fer nothin', an' lock him up in a dark cellar where there wasn't nothin' but coal an' great big rats, and they'd scare the life out of you. So I learned how to write, and I sent a letter to my aunt, and she come back from Texas and took me out and kept me here, and I'd rather die than go back there again."

"Oh," said Herbert, shuddering, "they'd never get me there—never, never! You



wouldn't let me go there, would you, Miss Helen?" with an appealing glance.

"No, Herbert."

"You'd make them take me to the poor-house, wouldn't you?"

"Do you think you could be happy there, Herbert?"

"Yes, as happy as a sick boy could be anywhere. Say yes, Miss Helen."

"Yes," she said, just as the bell was tapped for the closing exercises.

That afternoon she walked out to see Mrs. Lee. She found her looking much brighter and stronger. Helen told her of their plans about the quilt and the opera, and she listened with great interest.

"How very kind and thoughtful you are, Miss Helen! I am sure the good Lord will reward you for all your kindness to me and mine. I do not see how we would have managed to exist without you and Dr. Hern-don."

Helen blushed at this coupling of their names.

"I am sure we have only done our duty, Mrs. Lee; and now here is your diamond cross. I forgot to bring it the last time I came."

"Miss Helen, will you not oblige me by keeping it longer and wearing it when you sing in the opera?"



"Thank you, Mrs. Lee; it would add very much to my costume; but I am not sure that I will sing. Laura Houston and I have agreed to draw straws at the last rehearsal, so as to settle the question as to which of us shall take the principal part, and if the lot should fall to her, I shall not appear on the stage. But if I should sing, I will wear the cross for your sake. There will be no danger of my losing it, for I see that you have your maiden name in full engraved on the back. I must go now, and if I do not come as frequently as usual, Mrs. Lee, you will understand that it is because I am busy with the rehearsals, and not from neglect of my good friends."

"Yes, and if the end should come not too suddenly, I will send for you to redeem your promise of singing to me until I reach the gates of heaven."

"No matter where I am or what I am doing, I will come, Mrs. Lee. I will sing you this now."

It was a sweet old hymn she had heard Mammy sing:

"Oh, sing to me of Heaven  
When I am called to die,  
Sing songs of holy ecstasy,  
To waft my soul on high."

Mrs. Lee listened with rapt attention.



“ Will you sing that for me at the last, Miss Helen? ”

“ I will, Mrs. Lee.” They pressed each other’s hands in a close clasp, and Helen went home.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE OPERA

“Music, which gentler on the spirit lies  
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes!”  
TENNYSON.

**D**URING the next month the days flew by with the speed of lightning, as is usually the case when we are pleasantly occupied. Helen found time for several visits to the Lee family, as well as for a delightful call on Mrs. Herndon and her daughter. But the principal part of her time was spent in practicing the part of Lady Harriet for the opera, and in preparing the several dresses necessary for the different scenes by making some alterations in various costumes she had worn at parties.

Nearly every morning Professor Hermann, the music teacher under whom she had graduated, came to give her a lesson in singing. This was entirely voluntary on his part, and because he wanted his former pupil to do him credit, as he was well aware that his success in instructing Helen had been the cause of his getting more pupils than anything else.

“Now you are pe-er-fect in your part,” he



said proudly one morning toward the end of March. "The opera could come off to-morrow night, as far as you are concerned, and I expect to be ve-ery proud of my pupil."

"I thank you greatly, Professor, for your kindness in teaching me, and I hope to reflect credit upon your skill as an instructor; but you know I told you that Miss Houston and I were both going to prepare for the part of Lady Harriet, and that we would draw straws at the last rehearsal to decide which of us should sing."

"Miss Houston! Ah, Heaven!" rolling up his eyes and clasping his hands, "it would be a thousand pities if she should sing, for her voice is like that of a raven, and yours is like the nightingale." Helen bowed in acknowledgment of the compliment. "Nature has done its part for Miss Houston, I grant you, but overuse at an early age and a straining for effect has ru-ined her voice."

When Laura Houston heard Helen sing her part at their first private rehearsal she clapped her hands with delight.

"Your voice is clear as a bell, Helen, and mine is as hoarse as a frog. I have suffered so much with my throat this winter, for I have been to so many parties, and I have taken a little cold at each one. I am going to pray that the lot shall fall to you."

"Don't!" Helen raised her hands with



an imploring gesture. "I have sung so little in public that I lack confidence, and it would be just terrible to break down before that large audience, and spoil the performance."

The day of the final rehearsal came, and the performers in the opera had invited a few friends to be present, in order to keep the great theatre from looking so bare and empty. By request, Helen Demoville wrote a note to Dr. Herndon, asking him to be present and to hold the straws for Laura Houston and herself to draw to decide which should sing. His answer was accompanied by some beautiful Malmaison roses, which he desired her to wear if she had any regard for him. She pressed the flowers to her lips before she placed them in water.

"Indeed, I will wear you, sweet roses," she exclaimed, her heart throbbing with delight.

She had not met Dr. Herndon since the night he had involuntarily spoken to her of his love. He had called repeatedly at the house, but she had invariably been absent at rehearsal. She took out the half dozen cards she had put away with the Doctor's photograph, and the faded violets and hyacinths.

" "Ah, when we love, we love so blindly," " she quoted. "I have had a good cry over



each one of these cards, because I was so disappointed at missing the Doctor's visits; and yet, strange to say, I love them."

The evening came, and Helen dressed herself in the light blue gown she was to wear in the first act if she sang. At the last moment she placed the roses in her dress and ran down the steps, with her white opera cloak over her arm.

"My daughter, I never saw you look so lovely," said her father as he took his seat by her side in their own carriage. "You have the rose and the lily on your cheeks, the violet in your eyes, and the sunshine on your hair!"

Dr. Herndon met them at the door of the theatre, and he escorted Helen to the green-room.

"I wanted to have the pleasure of accompanying you here this evening," he said, "but a professional engagement prevented."

Laura Houston came forward to greet them.

"You are perfectly beautiful to-night, Helen," she said as they kissed each other. "How are you, Dr. Herndon? They have decided that the drawing shall take place in front of the curtain, for the novelty of the affair. May I speak to you a moment, Doctor?"



They drew aside a few paces, and Helen could hear them whispering and laughing together.

"There is the signal," said the Doctor. "Suppose that I go on the stage first, and make the announcement, and then I will meet you young ladies, at the left entrance."

He looked very handsome and aristocratic as he stepped before the drop curtain and said, in a firm, manly tone:

"Ladies and gentlemen: I am requested to say to you that two of our most talented singers have practiced for the part of Lady Harriet in this opera, and they have decided upon the novel expedient of drawing straws for the position. The drawing will now take place, and the young lady who draws the shorter straw will be the prima donna of the evening."

The girls looked beautiful when they made their appearance. Laura Houston wore a delicate shrimp-pink gown, and Helen was dazzling in a blue silk, with the diamond cross glittering on her snowy neck, and the roses fastened in her corsage.

There was an approving murmur from the audience when the Doctor announced that Miss Demoville had drawn the shorter straw, and the trio left the stage.

"I congratulate you with all my heart, Miss Helen," said the Doctor as he shook her



hand. He felt supremely happy, for she wore his flowers.

"So do I," said Laura, giving her a kiss as the Doctor moved off. "I had my triumph in New Orleans, now for yours. But you look as pale as a ghost, and you tremble like a leaf. Sit here on the sofa while I get you some water."

She hastened after Dr. Herndon. In a few moments she overtook him, and laid her hand on his arm.

"Doctor, you had better come quickly to Helen Demoville. I believe she is going to faint. Oh, I am so sorry I persuaded you to cheat with the straws!"

"Will you please get her a glass of ice water, Miss Laura?" He hurried to the green-room, and was at Helen's side in a few seconds.

"Miss Helen, drink this." He sat down by her and held the glass to her lips. "If you are not well enough to act, you need not do so. Do you feel faint?" examining her pulse.

"I caught a glimpse of all those people, and I felt very strange. I suppose it was an attack of stage fright," she answered as she began to revive. "I have only sung in public at a few concerts we had when I was a pupil at the Conservatory in Cincinnati. I did not know the people there, and it is so different when you do, and the house will be so



crowded to-morrow night. I had no idea that I was so timid."

"Nor I," said he, admiring her all the more for it. "Who is your physician, Miss Helen?"

"I have never had one, Dr. Herndon."

"You have been very fortunate to escape sickness all your life, and you must have a good constitution. Your pulse is quick, but perfectly regular, and it is beginning to slow down, now that the excitement is subsiding. I could give you a dose of valerian, but it would be against my better judgment. Drugs are intended for the sick and the weak, and they are a positive injury to strong, healthy young ladies like yourself," so spoke the conscientious physician. There was no one standing near, and he unconsciously took her hand as he continued to speak. "Let me drop the rôle of medical adviser, and speak to you as your friend. I feel that I am not presuming, for you have honored me by wearing my roses as a token that you have some slight esteem for me."

The color was now beginning to creep back into Helen's cheeks and lips at this remark.

"If you are really unable to take your part to-night, I think that I can persuade Miss Houston to act as your substitute, but, for many reasons, I should prefer not to do so."

Helen shook her head.



"I promised to abide by the decision of the straws, and I have never yet broken my word."

"Be it far from me to interfere with your high sense of honor," he said, feeling quite guilty that he had yielded to the temptation of Laura Houston in cheating in the drawing, yet reflecting that it was only natural that he should wish to see the woman whom he hoped to make his wife win the glory of this occasion.

"Miss Helen," his tones were very kind and soothing, "I think your nervousness arises more from mental than from physical causes, and unless I have made a mistake in your character, you have wonderful powers of self-control. Now if you will reflect how much good you will do by singing for this poor family,—I have had many assurances that you would draw a fuller house than Miss Houston,—and how proud your father and all your friends will be of your success, especially myself, I think that you can brace yourself up to the effort. Will you try?" He looked at her with all his love glowing in his eyes.

"I will, Dr. Herndon." Her heart was too full for her to say more.

"Thank you," and he released her hand as he spoke.

Her color had returned, and she looked



gloriously beautiful. "Will you sit near the stage to-night and to-morrow night, so that when I look at you I will remember my promise, Dr. Herndon?"

"I will, with pleasure; and now they are calling for the performers to take their places on the stage." He shook hands and was gone.

In a few moments the curtain rose upon the first act, in which Lady Harriet is seated at her dressing table, and her attendants try to arouse her from the melancholy spell which has fallen over her like a cloud. During the opening chorus Helen had time to regain her self-possession, and when, after a short while, she sang a few lines in reply to questions addressed to her by Nancy, her maid, Dr. Herndon, who had never had the pleasure of hearing her sing before, thought he had never heard a voice so filled with liquid melody.

Emma Brooks, as Nancy, wore a bewitching costume of crimson cashmere trimmed with black velvet, which greatly enhanced her brunette beauty. She entered into her part with spirit, and her voice harmonized perfectly with that of Helen's.

Helen gave a perfect representation of the *ennui* which oppresses the woman of fashion whose soul rises above "the trifles that make up the sum of life" in society, and she looked at Dr. Herndon as if she fully endorsed the sentiment of the words when she sang:



“All my glowing, ardent wishes  
Please me not, are they fulfilled;  
What happiness I dreamed  
Always has disgust instilled.  
The homages they offer,  
Praise and honors they bestow,  
Leave me joyless, once obtained,  
Do not make with pride me glow.’”

Nancy threw a saucy spirit into her reply:

“Then from *ennui* to save you,  
Nothing is for you remaining  
But to let your heart be conquered,  
Not a particle remaining.’”

Then Sir Tristram Mickleby came upon the stage, and the audience laughed heartily at the merry romp which followed when the ladies attempted to “teach him how the peasants dance,” and they pulled the old fellow around so that he scarcely knew in what direction he was going, and when he exclaimed, “Mercy! —ah— I’m — out — of — breath!” he expressed his own condition exactly, and the audience applauded vigorously as the act closed.

Dr. Herndon came behind the curtain in a few moments.

“You look like yourself, now, Miss Helen,” he said, glancing with unveiled admiration at the young lady’s glowing cheeks. “You do not need any valerian now, do you?”



"No, indeed, Doctor," she laughed. "I am so glad that you persuaded me to go through with my part, for I am really enjoying myself. But Laura is calling me, so I must say *au revoir*."

The next scene, which is laid at the Richmond fair, was very bright and sprightly, and the duet between Lionel and Plunkett was beautiful, and the audience applauded the singers quite enthusiastically.

But the merry third act, with its spinning wheels, was the favorite, and when Lady Harriet, in response to Lionel's request for a song, took from her corsage one of the roses she wore, and, holding it in her outstretched hand, sang that beautiful air, of which the world will never grow weary,

" 'Tis the last rose of summer,  
Left blooming alone,' "

the applause was so vociferous that Helen was obliged to respond to the demand for an encore. Dr. Herndon seemed very much gratified at the comments of some professional musicians who sat near him.

"I never heard that air sung better by any amateur," said a man of noted musical taste. "Emma Abbott herself could not surpass that."

"Nor Patti, Nilsson, nor Kellogg," re-



plied another. "I have heard them all, and none of them gave me more pleasure than Miss Demoville has done to-night."

When the act was near its close, Helen saw one of the ushers touch the Doctor on the shoulder and whisper to him, and he left the theatre immediately. All her interest in her part vanished with his presence, but she managed to go through it with enough spirit to escape the disagreeable comments which would follow if the facts of the case should be discovered.

"'What's this dull town to me? Robin's not near,'" she hummed in her room as she took out the Doctor's photograph and gazed at it for a long time in silence. "There is not a man in the whole world whom I could love, honor, and obey more readily than I could this one," she thought as she remembered how he had influenced her to do her duty this evening. "Yet, with the irony of fate, there are dozens whom I could marry, and only this one whom I cannot."

Helen slept late the next morning, and when she awoke, Mammy brought her up a beautiful bouquet of roses, accompanied by a note.

"Dr. Hernton brought 'em hisse'f in de buggy, an' he tol' me not ter wake yer, so I kep' 'em in water tell now. Shall I bring yer breakfus' up now, honey?"



"Yes, thank you, Mammy." Helen tore open the envelope and read:

"DEAR MISS HELEN:

"Allow me to congratulate you upon the brilliant success you achieved last evening. I was prevented from doing so in person by a summons to attend Mrs. Lee. She is very ill indeed, and I feel uneasy about her. Yet I beg that you will not go to see her to-day, for the sight of her suffering might unnerve you so much that you could not sing to-night. I will see that every attention is paid to her, and the Misses Wade and Ross have offered their services in case they are needed. Let me advise you to stay quietly in your room all the morning, and in the afternoon you can take a drive, for the fresh air will revive you.

"I hope that you will be so kind as to pardon my presumption, but I recollected that you said you had no physician.

"Will you accept and wear the flowers I send? Words cannot express the pleasure you gave me by doing so last evening.

"I hope that nothing will prevent my witnessing the grand triumph which, I am sure, awaits you at the final performance. I am told that every seat in the house was sold as soon as it was ascertained that you would sing.



"With the greatest respect and admiration,  
I remain,

"Yours very sincerely,

"ARTHUR F. HERNDON, M. D.

"March 29th, 1883."

Helen followed the advice of the Doctor to the letter, and she looked blooming and beautiful when the curtain rose upon her in the presence of an audience which packed the theatre. The performance passed off even better than on the previous evening, but at the close of the first act Helen saw an usher hand a note to Dr. Herndon.

"Oh, I am so sorry, for Mrs. Lee must be worse, and the Doctor will have to leave the theatre, and his mere presence is an inspiration to me! I am sure that I cannot sing as well when he has gone."

The manager called her to look at the flowers which had been handed on the stage for her. There were beautiful designs of every description, and among them a very elegant harp with the card of her father's bookkeeper, Edgar Lawrence, attached. While all the performers were expressing their admiration, Dr. Herndon came up. His face was very pale, and he wore a troubled, anxious expression.

"Will you read that, Miss Helen," he said, handing her the note he had received.



It was from Miss Lucy Wade, saying that Mrs. Lee could not possibly live but a few hours longer, and that it was her dying request that Helen should fulfill her promise of singing to her at the last, and Miss Wade requested Dr. Herndon to bring the young lady immediately.

"I will go," said Helen as soon as she had finished reading it. "Will one of you gentlemen ask my father to meet me at the front door, and the other request Laura Houston to finish my part of the performance? Tell her that my dresses are all arranged, and they will fit her perfectly, and she is welcome to wear them."

She took the Doctor's arm, and they walked in silence to the box where her father was sitting.

"Papa, Mrs. Lee is dying, and they have sent for me to sing to her, as I promised. Will you go with me?"

"I cannot possibly do so, Helen." The tones of his tremulous voice indicated great emotion and agitation.

"May I escort your daughter, Colonel Demoville? My presence at Mrs. Lee's bedside is necessary, as I am her physician."

"Certainly, Dr. Herndon, I should be very glad to have you do so. James," to the driver, "you must wait for your Miss Helen until she is ready to return."



They passed the first part of their ride in perfect silence. At last the Doctor spoke, and his voice was scarcely more than a whisper.

"You gave up your pleasure and the prospect of a great triumph to gratify a sick person's fancy without a murmur, Miss Helen."

"It was my duty to fulfill my promise, Doctor."

"Yes, but there is not one person in a thousand who would have done it so cheerfully and unostentatiously. I cannot refrain from expressing my admiration for your whole course toward Mrs. Lee, Miss Helen. You have acted so nobly and generously toward her, and your motives have been so entirely disinterested."

Helen's heart was throbbing violently.

"No, Dr. Herndon, I have too much reverence for the truth to allow you to labor under such a misapprehension. A great deal that I have done for Mrs. Lee has—been—to give—pleasure—to—you." Then, shocked at her own boldness, she covered her face with her hands.

Then she felt them drawn aside.

"Helen," the Doctor whispered, "I love you dearly; can it be possible, darling, that you love me—just a little?"

"Not a little, but with my whole heart."

"And you would be willing to wait until I am able to marry you?"



“Until my life’s end, if you wish it, Arthur.”

“Darling, you have made me the happiest man on earth.”

As long as their lives lasted, Helen and Arthur remembered that scene which followed in that chamber of death; Mrs. Lee, calm and composed in the presence of the Great Conqueror, her weeping children struggling with the first grief of their young lives, the sympathetic friends and neighbors, and the beautiful young lady, subduing her own sorrow and singing those exquisite melodies of the better land. She was in the midst of Mrs. Lee’s favorite,

“ ‘ Oh, sing to me of Heaven  
When I am called to die ’ ”

when the dying lady made a sign to Dr. Hern-  
don to raise her higher, and as he complied  
with the request, her pure spirit passed  
through the gates of Paradise into the pres-  
ence of her Maker.



## CHAPTER IX

### IN CUPID'S COURT

"O love! 'tis a wonderful passion,  
It makes or it mars us all;  
By love men may walk with the angels,  
By love the angels may fall."

GEORGE ARNOLD.

**G**WINE ter year de weddin' bells er ringin' terec'ly," said the old driver the next morning as he munched the leg of a broiled spring chicken for his breakfast. "Dese ol' years yeared er heap er sof' talk las' night in de kerri'ge. Hit made de ol' man 'member de time he driv ol' marster w'en he wus er courtin' ol' miss, befo' de wah."

"Hol' yer sassy ol' tongue, Jeems, an' quit talkin' 'bout yer betters," snapped Mammy, growing jealous because he seemed to know more of her young mistress's affairs than she did. The old woman pushed aside her untasted coffee and rolls, and crept up the stairs, so as not to awaken Helen if she still slept.

"De angels is er whisperin' to 'er, lak dey use' ter do w'en she wus er baby," she thought as she saw the young lady smile in her slumber. "Hit may be dat Jeems is



right, an' Mammy gwine lose 'er chile. Ain' gwine lose 'er nuther," chuckling to herself; "Mammy gwine foller 'er wherever she go, lak de preacher read 'bout Rufe an' N'omye in de Bible: 'Wher' dou go'st, I go,' even ef it's ter Souf Ermeriky or Af'iky. Dis chile kin allers manage ter fin' somepin' ter do fer her young miss."

Helen turned over and opened her eyes.

"Is it late, Mammy?"

"Dat don' mek no diff'ence, honey. You des' lay still tell yer feels lak risin', an' den Mammy'll bring yer er tub er hot water, an' den yer kin tek yer baf, an' rub yer skin good wid dis yer crush tow'l, an' den de ol' 'oman'll bring yer brekfus'."

"It's a crash towel, Mammy, not crush," said Helen, laughing.

"Hit's all de same, honey, ef yer knows w'ut I mean. Might es well try ter get all de snags out der Massissip' Riber es ter try ter rectify de ol' 'oman's talk at dis late day."

Helen found that Mammy's prescription acted like a charm in removing that feeling of lassitude that follows a night of excitement and loss of sleep. She had arranged her hair and put on a lovely tea gown of white nun's veiling and lace, and was leaning back in a rattan rocker, indulging herself in a happy day dream, when Mammy came in, with a troubled countenance.



"I done tol' dat nigger, Jeems, not ter let er soul put deir foot 'cross dat doo' dis mornin', an', bress de Lawd, he done let Miss Laur' Houston in de parlor, an' say she won' tek no 'fusal ter see 'er 'less'n you's 'sleep, 'ca'se she's jes' er achin' ter tell yer all erbout las' night."

"Bring her right up to my room, Mammy."

"Why, Laura, it was very sweet of you to come, for you must have been as tired as I was last night," meeting her at the landing of the stairs with a kiss.

"Yes, but I took a long ride in the carriage early this morning, and that always revives me."

"Well, take off your hat, and have this large rocking-chair, and rest yourself while you tell me all about the opera."

"It passed off very well, considering all things. Of course I felt like a fraud, and as if it were obtaining money under false pretenses and all that sort of thing; but while I was changing my dress, Mr. Phelan went before the curtain and explained to the audience the sad circumstances which necessitated the change in the singers, and, of course, being ladies and gentlemen, they were all very careful not to let me see that they were disappointed, applauding me whenever it was possible, and even going so far as to send on the stage the flowers intended for you. I took good care



of them, and put them out in the dew last night and brought them to you in the carriage this morning with your dresses, which I return with many thanks."

Just here, Mammy, beaming with delight, brought the things in.

"Oh, the flowers are lovely!" exclaimed Helen, examining the costly designs, with the cards of the donors attached. "But, Laura, you really ought to keep them, for you justly earned them by your sweet singing."

"Indeed, I never thought of such a thing, Helen. Why, most of the names attached to them are those of gentlemen with whom I am very slightly acquainted, or not at all. My having been away so much since we left school has prevented my being as well known as you are."

"I tell you, Laura, what I thought I would do with these flowers, if you do not object," said Helen, after a moment's pause, "and that is, to send them to be used at Mrs. Lee's funeral. They always take away so much of the gloom that surrounds death, and I do not think there will be many others sent. Do you see any impropriety in my sending them?"

"None whatever. In fact, as the opera was for the benefit of Mrs. Lee and her family, I think there is a peculiar appropriateness in your sending them. I will take



them there in the carriage for you this morning, if you like."

"You darling girl! you are always so thoughtful and kind."

"Oh, that is nothing! But before I go let me tell you what I heard some of the audience say about Dr. Herndon last night, during the first act. They said they had never seen him look so well; that he was positively the handsomest man in the theatre."

"He is better than handsome, for he is good," remarked Helen. "No one could have done more for this poor Mrs. Lee, and now, to-day, he is making all the arrangements for the funeral. Of course, the expenses will be paid out of what we made last night."

"You are blushing, Helen; but, dearest, I do not know any one whom I consider more worthy of your love."

"He is not a marrying man, Laura. He is poor, and he has to support his mother and sister."

"Nevertheless, I shall expect to be first bridesmaid." Laura's smile was full of meaning as she kissed her friend good-by.

Mrs. Lee's funeral took place from Dr. Markham's church, and was largely attended by nearly all of Helen's friends. Everything was conducted according to the best usages; the pall-bearers were among the first citizens of the place, and Dr. Herndon helped carry



the handsome coffin, which was covered with the flowers Helen had sent.

Emma and Herbert seemed heart-broken at their great loss, and Miss Lucy Wade whispered to Helen that she was going to take them home with her for a few days.

"It would be too lonely and desolate for them in their own home, and everything would remind them of their mother. I think they had better stay with us for a week, and then we can decide what is best to be done for them," she explained.

That evening Dr. Herndon called upon Helen.

"My heart has been with you every moment of the time, darling, but it seemed almost like sacrilege for me to come sooner. Can I speak with your father to-night, Helen? I want to ask his sanction of our engagement."

"Must you, so soon, Arthur?"

"Why, certainly, Helen. You belong to your father, do you not? Therefore it is his prerogative to transfer his possession to me."

"Yes, I know, Arthur, you ought to ask his consent before we marry; but that is a long time away from the present."

"Long or short, the principle is just the same. The engagement should be sanctioned by his approval. Do you not remember the lines:



“ ‘I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Loved I not Honor more’? ”

“ As you will, Arthur. My only reason for hesitating was that I am by no means sure of his consent.”

“ In that case, darling, it would be better for us to know the worst at once.” He looked at her with a mournful expression in his handsome gray eyes.

“ I will tell him you wish to speak to him, Arthur.” She left the room with a deep sigh. She waited in the library a long time while they were talking, her heart throbbing violently.

“ I wonder what they are saying? But I will not stoop to listen at the portière,” she thought. “ Oh, I think I shall die if papa refuses his consent.”

The moments seemed like hours as she sat there listening to the tick of the clock. At last her father came to the door and called her. She entered the room without daring to raise her eyes, and stood in front of Colonel Demoville.

“ Helen, my daughter, look up at your father and tell him if your happiness depends upon your marrying Dr. Herndon.”

She raised her head, and looked at him with an earnest expression.

“ It does. Oh, papa, I should pray for death if you refused your consent! ”



Colonel Demoville took her hand and placed it within that of her lover's.

"She is yours, Dr. Herndon; and now I ask God's blessing upon you both, my children." He laid his hand reverently upon their bowed heads, and then he left the room.

Half an hour later their bliss was disturbed by a ring at the door-bell.

"I hope it is not any one calling to see me," said Helen, "for I have eyes and ears 'only for thee, dearest, only for thee.'"

She had scarcely finished speaking when the visitor was ushered in. It proved to be Edgar Lawrence.

"I will see you again soon, Miss Helen," said the Doctor, taking his leave.

The door had scarcely closed upon him when Mr. Lawrence began beseeching Helen to be his wife. She listened to him with ill-concealed impatience.

"I have given you an answer to that question several times before, Mr. Lawrence, and I think you ought to be satisfied that, as I am a grown woman and know my own mind, there is no prospect of my reversing my decision."

"But I love you devotedly, I am a good man of business, and I think I could make you happy."

"That would be impossible, Mr. Law-



rence, for happiness is dependent upon mutual love, and I have told you whenever you have spoken on the subject that I did not, could not love you."

"You must give me a better reason than that. Are you engaged to be married?"

"I could not give you a better reason," Helen said, evading the question.

"Then, as long as you are single, I mean to address you at every opportunity."

"I beg you will not, Mr. Lawrence; you will only give yourself trouble for nothing, and you will force me to be rude to you in my own home, which would be a mortification to my father, as well as to myself."

"Miss Helen, when a man of my temperament loves a woman, he leaves no stone unturned until he claims her for his own."

There was a glitter in his small black eyes that made one think of a snake, and Helen gave an involuntary shudder.

This scene was repeated, with slight variations, for many nights. Mr. Lawrence boarded at a house diagonally opposite that of Colonel Demoville's, and whenever Dr. Herndon called he was sure to follow about five minutes later. In fact, if the lovers had not devised opportunities for walking and riding, they would never have had an opportunity for seeing each other alone.

"I do not understand why that fellow



Lawrence should visit you so often, Helen," Dr. Herndon said during one of their drives, proving his mortality by a little fit of jealousy. "Cannot you give him a hint that his society is not essential to your happiness?"

"Now, Arthur, be reasonable, darling. As long as a young lady is in society she has to be agreeable to the gentlemen who call upon her, and papa likes this man. But I think you would be satisfied if you could look into my heart, and see how utterly distasteful his company is to me." All Helen's love for the Doctor shone in her beautiful eyes.

"Helen, I wish our engagement could be announced, for I don't think this fellow would come so often then."

"So do I, Arthur, but papa objects, and I suppose he is right. Long engagements are rarely consummated, and I have always thought that one reason for their failure was the gossip that always follows their being made public." Helen gave a deep sigh as she spoke.

At the end of the week Helen went to see Miss Lucy Wade about the Lees.

"Old Mrs. Burns is in great trouble. Her husband died a few days ago, and although she did not care much for the old man while he was living, yet now she seems to be grieving herself to death because she is so lonely."



"I have an idea, Miss Lucy," said Helen, when she had reflected a few minutes. "How would it do to let Mrs. Burns live with the Lee children, and do their cooking as pay for her board? There are enough rooms in the house for her to have one, and it would save her the house rent she has been paying."

"Very well, I reckon. Of course, she is not the equal of Herbert and Emma, but these poor white people always consider themselves as good as anybody, and the old lady will have to be provided with a scapegoat to vent her temper on in the place of Mr. Burns. I wish the funds we have were enough to justify us in hiring a little darky for them, for a white child would hardly be tough enough to stand her abuse."

"Yes, happiness is the negro's birthright, and it seems to be hard to deprive him of it. But perhaps it is best, Miss Lucy, that we cannot afford it, for I am afraid there would soon be another little black angel; that is, if there are colors in Heaven."

"I should not wonder," said Miss Lucy, laughing. "There is another old lady, Mrs. Kennedy, for whom our church provides and furnishes her a little colored servant to wait on her, and they always quit in three weeks, their spirits becoming crushed in that period. We tried to adopt the plan of not paying them anything unless they stayed until the



month was up, but it made no difference. They invariably preferred to leave, even if they lost every cent they had earned, they were so miserable. Yes, I think it would be about the best thing we could do for the Lees, to put Mrs. Burns with them; for of course they cannot live alone, and she would be sort of a protection to them; and it would cost very little more to feed three than two; in fact, I think the old lady would save for them, for she has always been compelled to live on the smallest amount that would keep soul and body together. She seems to dread being sent to the poorhouse very much, for she thinks it would be a degradation to her pride. Your father would have no objection to her living there, do you think he would?"

"None in the world. He is always glad to gratify me, and then he takes an interest in the Lees for the sake of their mother, who was a dear friend of his in childhood."

"Well, then, suppose we go around to see the old lady this morning and make the proposition to her."

"Very well, Miss Lucy."

They found her sitting over some ashes in the open fireplace, her head bowed, and her hands clasped around her knees, crooning a dismal ditty, a few words of which they caught now and then, something about being trou-



bled in mind. They let her sing on a few minutes before they disturbed her.

"Mrs. Burns, Miss Helen and I have come to invite you to go and live with Emma and Herbert Lee," said Miss Lucy, "and to cook for them, and take care of them."

"What! Me go an' live in that haunted house where things is throwed aroun' at night an' nobody cain't tell who throwed 'em?" She raised her head with a startled expression in her eyes.

"Maybe you would rather go to the poor-house."

"Humph!" turning up her nose, "they'd have ter handcuff me before they could git me thar."

"How would you like to go and live with Mrs. Kennedy?"

"Me! An' Miss Kannedy!" she almost screamed with rage. "Why, we'd tear one another's eyes out before the week was out! Never! I'd rather marry the Devil and live in hell than try ter git erlong with such a spit-fire as her! The very idee er sich er thing!"

"Well, now, let us reason about the matter, Mrs. Burns. You cannot live here alone, and you have no one to live with you," said Miss Lucy. "You have a shelter and food offered you in return for your services. The question is, will you accept our proposal?"



A long silence followed. At length the old woman raised her head and asked anxiously:

"Them Lees hain't seed nothin' sence they've lived there, have they?"

"Nothing that they could not account for."

"Then mebbe the spell is broke." A long pause for reflection. "Baiggers mus' n't be choosers!" Another interval of silence. "Miss Lucy—I—reckon—I'll—hev—ter—go."

"Very well, Mrs. Burns. Pack up your things and we will send a dray for them in the morning."

"Our offer was received without thanks, instead of 'declined with thanks,' like the efforts of so many would-be authors," said Helen with a laugh, as soon as they had got out of hearing.

"Oh, yes, I have become accustomed to that sort of thing! Of course, persons of refinement, like the Lees, are grateful for favors, and it affords them great pleasure to give expression to their feelings. But those made of commoner clay, like this old woman, seem to owe a grudge to people who are better off than themselves. They are not satisfied with our Heavenly Father's distribution of His favors, consequently they would rather die than acknowledge that you had conferred



any benefit on them, even when, as in this case, it saves them from starvation."

"It is almost enough to prevent any one from being charitable to witness ingratitude like this on the part of the recipient, do you not think so, Miss Lucy?"

"Why, no, indeed, child. It only teaches us to do good for the sake of sweet charity alone, and not for the reward of thanks. Besides, do you not remember the texts, 'Charge them who are rich in this world, that they be ready to give and glad to distribute, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may attain eternal life'; and 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations'?"

"Well, Miss Lucy, you have taught me a lesson this morning, and whenever I do any good hereafter, I will try to be sure that I am actuated entirely by motives of charity and not by the hope of any thanks I may receive. Now, I must return home. Will you be so kind as to stop and let me know how the Lees are getting along under this new arrangement, the next time you come down town?"

"I will, with pleasure, Helen. Good morning. Oh, by the way, Dr. Herndon was so



kind and thoughtful when he was making the arrangements for Mrs. Lee's funeral. I think he is an elegant gentleman."

"Yes, and he appreciated Mrs. Lee's cultivation and refinement. Good-by. Come soon."

Miss Wade called on Helen in a few days.

"Well, I suppose we ought to be very well satisfied with the way things are getting along at the Lee's, Helen," said Miss Lucy. "Herbert seems bright and happy, and, like all children, he appears to be recovering from his mother's death rapidly. But Emma mopes and pines more than I like to see a young girl do. I sent for Dr. Herndon, and he said she did not need medicine; you know, in the new-style practice, they give very little, especially to the young. He said she needs cheerful surroundings, and it is just that that it is so hard to provide for her, she is so much more refined than most of the girls who live near her, and of course she and old Mrs. Burns do not assimilate any more than oil and water. I think it would be a good plan for me to let my class in embroidery meet there on Tuesdays and Fridays. That would provide her with society for two afternoons in the week, at any rate."

"That is an excellent idea, and I can take her out driving with me on two of the other days. How is Mrs. Burns doing?"



"Well, pretty well for her, I suppose. She seems fond of Herbert, but she rather resents Emma's not having much to do with her. Oh, I forgot to tell you she had found something to vent her temper upon."

"That is lucky. Tell me all about it, please."

"Well, it is literally a *scapegoat* this time. One of Herbert's kids was limping around with a stiff ankle, and it struck me that the old woman might know something about it, so I asked her how it happened. 'Yes, I know,' she said, standing in the kitchen door with her arms akimbo, and looking at me defiantly, 'fer I done it myself. He come er stickin' his nose in the hominy pot while I was er gittin' breakfas', an' I took er brickbat an' hit 'im with it, an' I'll do it again if I choose.'"

"She is a queer old customer, and I wish that Emma and Herbert could be in better hands. I must ask papa at dinner to-day if he ever received a reply to the letter he wrote to their grandfather in England." She told Miss Lucy all about it. When she asked her father the question, he shook his head.

"Is that not rather strange, papa?"

"I do not think so, daughter. Sir Hilary Herbert has the credit of being the most obstinate man in Christendom, and I suppose when he read my letter he tore it up and scat-



tered the pieces to the winds, and determined to go on in his unfatherly course."

"It is a great pity, is it not, papa?"

"Yes. Any man who could act thus is a brute. Are the children provided for, Helen?"

"Amplly for the present, papa."



## CHAPTER X

### THE FORGED CHECK

"I do not see  
Why God should e'en permit some things to be  
When He is love;  
But I can see,  
Though often dimly, through the mystery  
His hand above."

OPHELIA G. BROWNING.

LIFE ran in a smooth, sunny channel for Helen Demoville for the next few weeks. Her only grievance was the persistent courtship of Mr. Lawrence.

"It is a little singular," she thought, "that the blessing and the bane of my existence should each be a lover. However, I ought not to complain, for 'there is no rose without its thorn,' and other young ladies, I suppose, are subject to similar annoyances. It would not trouble me so much if it were not for the fact that I have taken such a prejudice to this man. I think that he has a wretched expression, and whenever I shake hands with him I feel cold shivers run over me; but I will try to bear it alone, for Dr. Herndon is worried enough already by Mr. Lawrence's following him here whenever he calls, and I



should hate to be the cause of a duel between them. Oh, anything rather than that! for I heard that Mr. Lawrence was a splendid shot, and Arthur might be the one to fall!" She shuddered at the thought.

One bright morning in the early part of May Helen was seated at the piano trying a very difficult piece of new music which Dr. Herndon had brought her the evening before, when Mammy entered the parlor with a note.

"Yer par sent yer dis by Isaac, de office boy. He waitin' outside fer er answer."

Helen took it from her and read:

"DEAR HELEN:

"A telegram from Liddell & Smith summons me unexpectedly to New Orleans on business. Please pack my valise and send it immediately by Isaac. I expect to return by half past seven this evening, but if anything should happen to prevent my doing so, you can invite Laura Houston to spend the night with you to keep you from being lonely. In haste,

"Your affectionate father,

"A. F. DEMOVILLE.

"May 11th, 1883."

Helen complied with his request, and resumed her practicing. She became so absorbed in the music that she was utterly un-



conscious of the flight of time. All at once she was startled by a pair of piercing black eyes looking straight into hers.

"Oh, how you frightened me, Mr. Lawrence!" with an involuntary shiver. "I did not hear the bell ring or the door open, and you gave me such a shock! Is there anything the matter with my father or at the office?"

"Your father has left on the train, and the office is all right. I came to see you, Miss Helen, to get a final answer from you to the question I have asked you so often. It seems impossible for me to have a private conversation with you at night, for that fellow Hern-don is always prowling around, confound him!"

"He has as good a right to call as you have, Mr. Lawrence," said Helen, irritated by the man's insolence, "and I will not hear one of my best friends criticised in that manner."

"But I have pleaded so often with you to give me a better right than any one else, and you have never treated me with the consideration which a man deserves from the woman to whom he pays the highest compliment in his power. I have called now to ask you for the last time, if you will be my wife."

"Mr. Lawrence, I repeat the answer I



have given you always; I will never marry you." She clinched her teeth and frowned.

"Helen Demoville, do you know that I have it in my power this day to reduce you and your father to absolute want, if you refuse my offer, and that I will not scruple to use that power?"

"Mr. Lawrence, I repeat my refusal. I would rather beg my bread in the streets than to marry a man like yourself, whom I can neither respect nor love."

"'Revenge is sweet,'" he said slowly, looking at her with a venomous expression in his eyes. "I will make you rue that speech, my lady, until the closing day of your life!" He left the room, slamming the door after him.

Helen threw herself down on the sofa and cried bitterly.

"Oh, I hope he will not carry out his threat! I should not mind it so much for myself, but for my father, with his gray hairs, it would be too hard and cruel!" she murmured.

The rest of the day dragged along slowly; it seemed as if it would never end. At last the twilight came and Helen heard her father's footstep at the door.

"My dear papa, I have been watching for you so long that I thought you would never come," she cried, throwing her arms around



his neck. "I missed you ever so much! Did you have a pleasant trip?"

"Well, no, daughter; it was an utterly useless one. Liddell & Smith said they had not sent the dispatch, and they knew nothing about it. We inquired at the telegraph office, but we could find out nothing about it except that it had been brought there by a small negro boy."

"Was not that very strange, papa?"

"Yes, indeed, Helen. There is a deep mystery surrounding the matter, and I cannot help feeling uneasy about the affair. Liddell & Smith questioned their bookkeeper closely, but he seemed to be unable to throw any light upon the subject."

"Did you learn the name of the bookkeeper, papa?"

"His name is Lawrence, and, by the way, he is a brother of the man who keeps our books."

"Indeed!" Helen said nothing more, for just then Dr. Herndon called.

"How does it happen, Helen, that our happiness has not been marred in the usual way this evening?" the Doctor asked as he arose to take his departure.

"Perhaps Mr. Lawrence has learned that lesson." She laughed as she pointed to a screen on which was painted a picture of three owls on a very small limb and this motto,



"Two are company and three a crowd."

"That was meant for a hint to him, Arthur."

"Helen," said her father next morning, "I must draw some money out of the bank to-day and let you pay off all the bills we owe. We made quite a large deposit day before yesterday, the proceeds of an immense sale of cotton we had on hand belonging to our country customers, and our commissions will amount to quite a sum. I intended drawing it yesterday, but that wild-goose trip to New Orleans prevented. Make a little memorandum of the amount you need, and then give it to me."

"There it is, papa." Helen handed him a slip of paper in a little while. "I am sorry it is such a large sum, but I tried my best to keep the bills down."

"You have done splendidly, daughter, especially for your age. Well, I will attend to this matter as soon as I reach the office, to prevent forgetting it."

"Where is Lawrence, Payne?" he asked one of the clerks as he noticed that the book-keeper's desk was unoccupied.

"He has not come down yet, sir, and I never knew him to be late before."

"Perhaps you had better send Isaac to his boarding-house to see if he is sick."

The boy soon returned.

"He ain't dar, Kern' 'Moville an' de lan'-



lady say he ain't be'n dar sence dinner-time, yistidd'y."

"That is strange," said the Colonel. He took the check book from his desk and filled out a blank. "Payne, I will just step around the corner and attend to this myself."

"Good morning, Mr. Miller," he said to the cashier at the Savings Bank. "Please give me the money this calls for," handing him the check.

The man took the paper and examined it; then he looked at Colonel Demoville with a queer expression.

"You know that you have no money on deposit here, Colonel."

"I—no—money—here?" repeated the old gentleman in a bewildered tone. "Why, see here, Miller," drawing out his deposit book, "we put \$30,000 here day before yesterday."

"And yesterday at two o'clock you drew out \$30,000," replied the cashier.

"I? At two o'clock? Why, I had nearly reached New Orleans at that hour."

"Don't you see that some one has torn a check out of this book?" Then reaching down a file of papers, "Is not this your signature?"

"It is the cleverest forgery I ever saw executed. Who presented the check?"

"Your bookkeeper, Lawrence, as usual. We suspected nothing wrong at the time;



yet, now I come to think of it, I saw him step on the train last night as you got off at the depot. He has gone to Canada like all other defaulters, I suppose."

"My God! Miller, then my business is utterly ruined!" gasped the Colonel. He could see now why the false dispatch had been sent to get him out of the way until the forgery was completed. Claspings his hands over his forehead, he walked home and almost fell as he clutched the bannisters at the foot of the stairs in his hall and ejaculated:

"My daughter, I am ruined! That scoundrel Lawrence has run away with all the funds belonging to our country customers, and it will take all the property I have on earth to repair the loss they have sustained!"

It was a fearful day for both of them. Colonel Demoville writhed in agony as if he had received his death stroke, and Helen tried in vain to console him.

"Do not grieve so much about it, papa!" she implored him. "I am young and strong, and I can work for both of us. It is not half so bad as if one of us had been taken and the other left all alone in the world."

"It is terrible, *terrible*, Helen!" he moaned. "To think of losing my all at my time of life, and there is no other business in which I can engage, and this requires capital. To think of these little hands that have never



done a day's labor," pressing her hands to his lips, "working for me! Oh, that is heart-rending!"

"Papa, don't grieve so, for my sake! You will make yourself sick."

He tried to exercise self-control, but Helen could see that there was a fearful conflict going on within.

Dr. Herndon was extremely kind, but nothing that the young people could do alleviated the wound the old gentleman's pride had received.

The next day Colonel Demoville went back to the office and made the preliminary arrangements for placing his property in the hands of a receiver for the benefit of his creditors. With his assistance they made out a schedule of the real estate he owned.

"Why, this is quite a long list of very valuable property," said one of the most hopeful of his friends. "Cheer up, Demoville, it ought to bring more than enough to pay off your debts and support you for the rest of your life."

The Colonel shook his head mournfully.

"It might at another time, but property is considerably depressed here now, and it is nearly always sacrificed at a forced sale."

Helen never saw her father smile after his failure. She grew uneasy about him.



"This depression will kill him, if it lasts much longer," she thought, "for his high-strung, nervous temperament will give way under the strain, and then, oh, what will become of me? I do not mind the loss of property so much, but the misery of being left alone in the world. Oh, it is unspeakable!"

She knew that in a very short time they must give up the house they lived in, dismiss the servants who had been so faithful to them all the years of their life, and adopt a greatly inferior style of living, if, indeed, there should be anything left to pay their expenses. She hoped to be able to secure a few music scholars among her friends, and perhaps make enough that way to furnish them with the bare necessities, but she dreaded the effect of the change upon her father.

The old gentleman would sit for hours without speaking, twirling his thumbs over each other, or picking at his nails. Sometimes he would mutter, over and over:

"I cannot work! I am ashamed to beg!"

One morning he went down to his office as usual, and in a few hours he was brought back to the house in a carriage. As soon as Helen looked at him, she knew that the end could not be far off.

Dr. Herndon came immediately, and said that the attack was a stroke of paralysis. The young man remained by his side night and



day. Colonel Demoville lay in a stupor until just at the last, when a gleam of intelligence came into his eyes, and he placed his daughter's hand in that of the friend who had been faithful unto death to him.

There was a large attendance of sorrowful friends at the funeral, and Helen was bowed with grief as she leaned upon the arm of her affianced husband when they followed the flower-covered casket to the grave.

Miss Lucy Wade, who went in the carriage with them, insisted upon the young lady's going home with her and not returning to the desolate house, and the young girl consented.

The days went slowly, but quietly and peacefully. The Wades and Rosses were sympathetic and kind. No visitors were admitted except Laura Houston, who showed much feeling for her friend in her misfortune, and Dr. Herndon, who came every day.

One morning Laura called to say that, as the weather was growing so warm, her family were going for the summer to their cottage at Blount Springs, and her parents had sent a very pressing invitation to Helen to go with them as their guest. Laura promised that she should be as quiet as she liked, and not even take her meals at the hotel table unless it pleased her to do so. Helen thanked her warmly, but declined the invitation; for there



were many things that she must attend to, and they would take some time.

"Then join us later," urged Laura.

Helen shook her head sadly. "I do not think that I could bear the sight of the inevitable gayety at the Springs; but remember, dear friend, that I shall always appreciate your kind invitation just as much as if I had accepted it."

Helen felt that she must begin to form some plans for the future. She could not trespass upon the hospitality of this kind family much longer, for they were poor and dependent upon their own exertions for a living. She called Miss Lucy into her room to talk the matter over.

"My visit here has been so peaceful and calm that I should like to live here always, or until I marry," blushing a little, "and yet I must go."

"Why should you?"

"I have no money, Miss Lucy, and I am not willing to stay without paying board."

"Well, we have been discussing the matter, also, and we have decided to make this proposition to you, Helen. Living as plainly as we do, and keeping no servants, our expenses are very light, only twelve dollars a month for each person. Now, if you wish to stay with us and are willing to take care of your own room, we will be glad to have you, and



you can pay your share of the bills, as another young lady did at one time."

"Miss Lucy, you are very, very kind, but before I give you an answer, I think I ought to consult Dr. Herndon, for I have promised to be his wife some day." She looked down, and her cheeks grew very rosy.

"I agree with you perfectly, Helen."

That evening Helen laid the subject before the Doctor.

"I have a better plan to propose, darling," he whispered when she had finished, "and that is, for our marriage to take place immediately. It could be as quiet as you wish. I could not urge it when you were living in affluence, but now the case is different, and I am so anxious to claim you as my own, and to shield you from every rough wind that blows."

"Dear Arthur, do not tempt me to do what I think is an injustice to your mother and your sister. You earn only enough to support them now, and perhaps, if we wait a year or two, your practice may increase so much that marriage will be a wise step on your part."

"Helen, do you not know, my darling, that your claim on me is far greater than theirs?" He made an eloquent appeal to her, but at last she implored him to desist, for her heart was pleading for him also, and making it



harder for her to pursue the rigid line of duty she had marked out for herself. The next morning she told Miss Lucy that she would accept her kind offer.

"I am sure that we are delighted at the prospect of having you with us all the time, Helen." Miss Lucy's fine countenance glowed with enthusiasm. "I will start out to-day and look for some pupils to take music lessons from you. So many families are out of town, you must not feel discouraged if I do not succeed very well just now, and if you should not earn enough to pay your portion of the expenses of the house during the summer months, it does not matter, for our credit is good and the bills can stand over until the winter. I wish we had a piano, so that you could give lessons here, instead of going around in the sun with your heavy mourning dress."

"Miss Lucy, my piano was not included in the schedule of property to be sold, for it belonged to my mother and she left it to me. It is a very fine instrument, with pearl keys, and my father paid a thousand dollars for it in New York. Will you be so kind as to superintend having it moved here? I am such a coward that I do not feel as if I could ever go into my old home again."

"I will, with pleasure, Helen."

She took a bunch of keys and a list of



articles belonging to Helen, and when they were brought in the place seemed much more like home.

When Mammy heard in some way that Helen was expected to take charge of her own room, she came tearing out to Wade's house as fast as her feet could bring her.

"She sharn' do it, dat my chile sharn'! Neber done sech er thing sence she wus borned. Mammy gwine come here ebery day an' do hit fer 'er. Neber min' 'bout who gwine tek keer er Mammy. I gwine tek er room some'res 'round 'ere, an' pick up er leetle somepin' ruther t' eat. 'Ere, chile, tek dis." She ran her hand into her deep pocket and brought up the stocking full of money and her check book, and handed them to Helen. "Mammy don't want nobody er dancin' ober her grave fer w'ut she's got, an' I allers tol' yer w'ut's mine's yourn; so now I gib yer all dis 'ere ter hab an' hol' f'om dis time fo'th fereber mo'. Amen!"

"But, Mammy, I cannot take your money," remonstrated Helen. "This is all you have saved up for your old age, and how will you live if you give me all you have?"

"Well, honey," scratching her head, "you kin' jis' gib de ol' 'oman 'nough ter pay 'er rent ebery mont' an' er leetle more fer grub an' 'ciety dues, so's Mammy be buried decent w'en de good Lawd send fer 'er, an' you



keep de ballens, an' use it lak yer want ter. Mammy 'd ruther fer you ter keep it any way, 'ca'se she 'fraid somebody tek it. Nobody wouldn't tech it w'en I lib in de big 'ouse wid y' all, but de t'ief 'll come in leetle nigger shanty eb'ry time 'e git er chance."

Helen put the money away for the old woman, and she borrowed a little to pay her board during the summer, and returned it as soon as she was paid by her pupils.

During the long, warm days Helen practiced the rudiments of music diligently, in order to make herself proficient as a teacher.

"I feel almost happy once more," she said aloud one morning when she was running the scales rapidly on the piano. "There is nothing like employment for the mind when one is in trouble or grief."

"No, ther' ain't, nuther," assented Mrs. Burns, who had entered the parlor unperceived by Helen. "W'en I wus er waitin' fer Clem Moore ter come back an' marry me, did I set down in the chimbley corner an' mope an' fret? No-sir-ee-Bob-horse-fly! I milked my eighty head er cows twict ever' day an' I made my fo' pound er butter, and I turned the milk with runnet, an' a'ter erwhile w'en mother moved ter er settlement on Leaf River, ther' come erlong er tailor an' he tuck board at our house, an' he had eighteen



'printices boun' ter him ter learn the trade, an' they all quit 'im but me 'n' Ailsy Stone. I worked fer 'im at a dime er day an' foun' merse'f. We set on cushions on the floor with our feet tucked under us, an' you could go to the spring ter git er drink an' stay es long as you min' ter, an' I wusn't er gwine ter kill merse'f er workin'. At the end er five year he give me five hund'ed dollar an' a diamant ring cost eighty dollar. But this 'ere Emma Lee jes' sets an' sets an' cries a'ter 'er mother, which she cain't bring 'er back f'om the dead nohow, an' hit don't do 'er no good ner her mar w'ut's dead, nuther. Ef she'd run eroun' with the other gyurls hit 'd do 'er health some benefit, w'ich she's got er very unhealthy color; but no, she thinks herse'f better'n air nuther po' pusson ther' is," with a sniff of disdain. "I come ter ask yer, Miss 'Moville, w'en that air house we're er livin' in is er gwine ter be sol'."

"I do not know, Mrs. Burns."

"That's mighty quare, an' you the owner of it, too. Well, what air we ter do then, w'en hit is sold?"

"I cannot say, Mrs. Burns. I hate to think about the matter."

"I jes' want ter know so's ter form mer own plans, 'ca'se I'd ruther be put inter fo' pieces er plank then ter live in the house with



Miss Kannedy, ol' hateful hate! Will yer let me know soon es ever yer find out 'bout hit, Miss 'Moville?"

"Just the very moment, Mrs. Burns. They will advertise the sale in the paper. I suppose they are waiting for some of the people to return to the city, so that the property will bring a higher price."

"Much erbleege! I likes that Herbe't. He's a heap better boy 'n 'is sister. Well, good-by 'n' God bless yer!"



## CHAPTER XI

### AT EBB-TIDE

"I am now in Fortune's power;  
He that is down can sink no lower."

BUTLER.

**T**HE next morning Helen was aroused very early from her sleep by some one ringing the door-bell and pounding on the front door. It was Mrs. Burns, who wrung her hands when she was admitted into the house and cried:

"Oh, get up, all of you, and come over to the house and see what is the matter with that girl, Emma! She's jest er layin' ther', es white es er ghos', an' es cold es er piece er marble, an' I've called to her and called to her an' shuck 'er an' shuck 'er, an' she *won't* say nothin', an' I b'lieve ter mer soul she's dead. Oh, what er fool I was ever ter go an' live in that hainted house! All night I was er dreamin', an' I seen Miss Lee, jes' es plain, come an' lay 'er han' on her darter's forehead, an' now I know the gal's dead. Come and see; oh, come and see!"

Thoroughly alarmed, all the family put on their clothes hastily, and ran over to the



cottage. It was a pitiful sight which awaited them there—Herbert, crying bitterly, as he called his sister by every endearing name he could think of, and imploring her to speak to him once more, and Emma, lying pale and beautiful in that dreamless sleep which shall end on the resurrection morning.

Dr. Herndon, having been summoned by a messenger, reached there almost as soon as the ladies did. He shook his head sadly as he laid his hand on the pulseless heart.

"She must have died while she was asleep, several hours ago. Her death was caused by heart failure, brought on by her excessive grief for her mother."

The rest of the day was spent in preparations for the funeral, which the Doctor said should take place the next morning. Helen devoted herself to the task of comforting Herbert, who was terribly distressed.

"Oh, Miss Helen, I am all alone in this great big world, with nobody to take care of me!" he cried. "Don't send me to that dreadful orphan asylum where the children are treated so badly! You know you promised that you would not. Send me anywhere else, even to the poorhouse. I know I could be happy there, for Miss Eliza Parsons is such a nice lady, and she is so very kind to me. Send me to the poorhouse, please do, Miss Helen!"



"Send you to the poorhouse, Herbert?" Now that the time had come when such a thing was possible, the idea was very revolting to Helen. "Indeed, I will do nothing of the kind. I would rather work my fingers to the bone than even to think of your being in such a place! No, I am going to take you home with me, and provide for you as if you were my own little brother; that is, if Mrs. Wade and Miss Lucy and Miss Nettie, and the other ladies are willing that I should do so," turning to them.

"We cordially approve of your plan, Helen," said Mrs. Wade. "I think it will brighten us all up to have a child in the house, and we will all do what we can to assist you in taking care of your charge, and I think that the effort you will be compelled to make will do much toward alleviating your own sorrow."

They all stayed together that night and watched over the body, according to the custom in the South, and when the plain little funeral was over they took Herbert home with them, and gave him a cozy little room which adjoined Helen's.

In an hour or two, Mrs. Burns came over, snuffing and crying.

"I seed in the paper over to Mr. Hobson's store wher' the cottage is er gwine ter be sol' nex' week; not thet I keer, nuther, fer I would



n't sleep ther' air nuther night an' hev dead folks er rubbin' the'r han's over me, no, sir, not ef yer was ter give me a million er dollars. I heerd ter-day that some rich lady er nuther hed died an' lef' er house ter our chu'ch, an' they says Dr. Mark'um is er gwine ter turn hit inter er home, like, fer all er us po' ladies w'ut hain't got no husbun's er pertec-ters; an' I heered he wus er huntin' er me now ter put me in ther'; but he'll nuver fin' me, no, sir, not ef I hev' ter go out in the woods an' hide, fer I tell yer me 'n' Miss Kannedy nuver could ergree ter live under the same ruf, 'ca'se we'd be lak them Kilkinny cats I've heered Burns tell erbout in 'is ol' Irish coun-try; they fit, an' they fit, an' they fit, an' when they got through ther' wer'n't none of 'em lef' 'cep'in' er cloud er fur, an' er few toe-nails; an' I let you know it'd be my haid an' nails, an' not hern, fer I'm er born fighter."

Helen could well believe it, as she looked at her excited face.

"But I've got ter live somewher's untel Ol' Master calls fer me ter go, so I've made up my mind ter go ter the po'house, an' I'm on mer way ther' now, 'ca'se I don't want ter stay nair nuther night in that hainted house, 'ca'se Emma'll be er prowlin' eroun' 'erse'f. I'm er gwine ter walk out ther' this very evenin'. Mr. Pa'sons'll let me stay all night w'en I tell 'im how things is, I know, an'



then they kin git the papers made out ter-morrer, an' so I jes' stopped by ter git the leetle boy. Come on, Herbert, an' go with me. Yer know yer allers said yer'd ruther go ther' then ter be put inter the olphin ersylum, an' hit's one er t'other this time, sho' es shootin'."

The boy began to cry, and Helen put her arm affectionately around his shoulder.

"Do not be frightened," she said soothingly. "I have not forgotten my promise, and I am going to keep you with me."

"With you?" Mrs. Burns opened her eyes wide in astonishment. "W'y, wher' on the airth are yer goin' ter git the money ter pay 'is way with?"

"'The Lord will provide,'" quoted Helen reverently. "I will make an honest effort, and if I have faith, 'even as a grain of mustard seed,' I shall be successful."

"I glory in yer spunk, Miss 'Moville. Course I wanted the chile, an' I'd er tuck good keer on 'im, lak I allers has done; but anybody kin see outen half er eye thet this 'ere boy's come er good blood, an' mebbe he'd pine an' fret an' be mis'able 'mongst t'other po' folks, lak 'is sister Emma done, 'specially w'en 'e grows er leetle older. Well, good-by, Herbert, God bless ye!" she pressed her withered lips to his forehead, "an' I hope the Lord'll 'ward yer fer yer kindness ter the



olphin, Miss 'Moville," shaking hands. "I mus' be er gittin' erlong tow'ds the po'house, 'ca'se hit's better'n fo' mile, an' that's er good long piece fer er ol' woman lak merse'f. This 'ere's somepin' I nuver 'lowed ter come ter, 'ca'se I wus allers willin' ter wo'k untel I got too ol'; but mebbe the good Lord knows best; I'm er gwine ter try ter think thet He does."

She wiped the tears from her faded old eyes, and then trudged away. Helen's heart ached because her own means were so limited that she was not able to provide her with the small amount that would keep her from starving.

Herbert's eyes were swollen from crying so much, so Helen made him lie down, and stroked his head and face gently with her fingers, and soon he was in a very sound sleep. Mammy crept in on tiptoe.

"I declar', Miss Helen, dat's de fus' time I eber seed de boy," she whispered. "W'y, I allers t'ought dey wus po' w'ite trash lak Miss Bu'ns, 'ca'se dey all libed 'long one er-nudder. I be'n po'ly, honey, er I'd er come ter de fun'al," apologetically. "But anybody kin jis' look at dis chile an' see 'is fine hyar an' 'is smoof skin, an' dey'd know right erway he wus quality."

She sat and gazed at him without speaking, brushing the mosquitoes away from his face



with her turkey-tail fan until her charge awoke. When Herbert opened those magnificent brown eyes of his with their long, silken lashes, Mammy's astonishment increased greatly.

"This ain't no common chile, is it, Miss Helen? He look lak he par might er be'n er king in de ol' kentry."

"No, Mammy, he is not common," answered Helen. "My father knew his mother in England. They were schoolmates or playmates when they were young people, and he said they were an elegant family, and they lived in a castle."

"I tol' yer so," chuckled the old woman; "yer cain't fool dis chile, 'ca'se ol' Cla'issy know quality whereber she see 'em. De rich blood'll tell anywher'; hit'll show in de skin an' de hyar," rubbing her hand over Herbert's head, "an' eben in de nails an' de feet an' de han's. Mammy so sorry fer de po' chile. Who gwine tek keer fer him, Miss Helen, now he mar an' he sis'er done daid?"

"I am going to try to do so, Mammy."

"You? My po' mistiss's chile, how is you gwine do hit w'en yer ain't got 'nough er de money yer mudder lef' yer ter buy salt ter pickle er jaybird wid? Honey, you jes' tek some er dat outen Mammy stockin'. Mammy wouldn't do nofin' 't all fer de chile ef 'e



wus buckra, she do hit 'ca'se he quality lak you, honey."

"Well, Mammy, perhaps I shall borrow some of your money if my music pupils do not commence to take lessons soon.

That evening Dr. Herndon called.

"Helen, how does Herbert seem to be?" he asked.

"He is resting quietly now, Arthur, and I think that he is asleep."

"Poor little fellow! He used to say that he wanted to live at the poorhouse when his mother and his sister should die, because he was always treated so kindly when I took him out there with me. He seemed to have a dread of going to the orphan asylum. Has he mentioned the subject to you to-day?"

"Yes, Arthur, he reminded me of a promise that I had made him that I would send him to the poorhouse."

"What did you tell him, Helen?"

"Arthur, the idea of having this aristocratic boy intimately associated with paupers was so revolting to me that, on the impulse of the moment, I told Herbert that I would take care of him myself, and he should never go to the poorhouse. Of course, dearest, I should have asked your consent before making this arrangement, and I hope you will forgive me for not doing so, but I thought that you would be willing, as your disposition is so



noble. I think Nature must have intended me for a crab, I am always doing things backwards. Will you give your consent to my plan, my dear Arthur?"

She was so beautiful, and she looked at him in such a winning way that Dr. Herndon felt as if he could refuse nothing that she asked.

"I am willing for you to take care of the boy, Helen, but I will pay his expenses myself."

"Now, Arthur," she remonstrated, "Mammy has taken a great fancy to him, and she says that I can use her money; besides, I shall be rolling in wealth when I get all my music pupils."

"No, Helen, I will take that burden from your shoulders." He spoke affectionately, and yet so firmly that Helen felt as if she must not contend with him. "I cannot have my future wife working herself to death. Darling, I have a prospect of obtaining a more lucrative position next spring, and, if I succeed, our marriage must take place as soon afterwards as possible."

"Yes, Arthur." Helen's face was radiant with delight. "When we are married will you let me take care of Herbert as before?"

"When we are married," Helen,—"there was marvelous sweetness in the Doctor's voice—" I do not think that I can ever leave a wish



of yours ungratified. Dearest, will you go with me now to see my mother? She has learned to love you already as a daughter, and I should like to have you go with me to visit her every evening."

At first Helen went as a matter of duty, but soon she began to enjoy these calls very much indeed. Mrs. Herndon and Miss Leila were quite intelligent ladies, and Helen was often highly amused at the bright sallies of wit which passed between the trio.

"I hope that you do not consider my taking you so often to our home as an imposition on your good nature, Helen," the Doctor said as they were returning from one of these visits. "You seem to enjoy going, and my mother and my sister consider your calls as their greatest pleasure."

"Going there has become the delight of my life, Arthur," replied Helen. "At first I went merely to please you; I could not help feeling a little timid and nervous, fearing that the ladies might not be favorably impressed with me; but that has worn away by degrees, and I have learned to love your mother and Leila dearly for your sake, and because they resemble you. Then the walks with you are just heavenly, Arthur, even if you should not speak a word."

"Thank you, Helen. My darling, I believe you are almost as much in love with me



as I am with you. Promise me, will you not, that you will be my wife in the spring, whether I get that appointment or not?"

"Dear Arthur, in April I will consent to share your fortune, whatever it may be, for time and eternity; 'for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health until death us do part.' Laura Houston has returned now, and she has been so kind about getting music pupils for me. She does not mind asking any one, and many of the people that I used to visit send their children to me. I have twenty pupils now, and that is as many as I can teach—six hours every day and eight on Saturday."

"I am afraid you are working too hard, Helen. It almost breaks my heart to think of your having to toil, when you have never been accustomed to doing so."

"Arthur, except for the loss of my father, which is still a deep grief to me, I am happier now than when I was frittering away my time in society; for my life is devoted to a good purpose now, and I accomplish a great deal by my efforts. I have a quiet, peaceful home among Christian people who care nothing for 'the fashion of this world which passes away.' Work is the best remedy for me, dear Arthur, for it keeps me from moping, and it helps me to forget my recent affliction. Besides, I appreciate the fact that I



am able to support myself by my own exertions. Father's property sold for much less than its real value. That Lee cottage brought only fifty dollars because it was said to be haunted, and the present owner has made it into a store and he will rent it for two hundred dollars a year. There was just barely enough money from the sale to pay off the claims of my father's creditors, and not a cent left for me. If I were not earning this hundred dollars every month, I should be quite poor, and as I could not marry you without a decent trousseau, I do not see how our marriage could ever have taken place."

"All is for the best, no doubt, Helen. You will be willing to live at my present home with my mother and sister when we are married, will you not, darling?"

"I should prefer to live there and have them with us. Your mother can guide me in many matters about which I am ignorant, because I lost my mother at such a tender age."

"Helen, you make me love you more than ever when you talk that way. You are so lovely that I am not afraid of 'family jars' caused by your living in the house with your mother-in-law. When these terrible household cyclones occur, generally both parties are to blame; but frequently the younger woman is more so than the elder, whose judgment is riper. Of course, a man must take



his wife's side in a conflict of this kind, for he has vowed at God's altar to 'forsake all others and cleave only unto her'; but I do not see how he could love his wife with his whole heart, as before, when he reflected that she had been the cause of his alienation from the mother who gave him birth."

"I promise you, Arthur, that nothing of this kind shall ever occur between us. I do not see how it could happen unless I put myself first, and selfishness is not one of my faults, do you think so?"

"No, indeed, Helen, the reverse is the case with you, for you are extremely unselfish. In fact, darling, I have not yet been able to discover a single fault in you."

"Well, then, Arthur, please begin the discovery right now, for I am made up of faults, and it would be really too discouraging to have you find out a new one every day for six months after our marriage. Perhaps I had better make you my father confessor, and give you a category of my imperfections at once. In the first place, I am terribly lazy, and it is a great trial to me to get up for the seven o'clock breakfast at the Wade's."

"Yet Miss Lucy says you are always in time."

"Then I am very self-willed."

"But you have always done as I wished since we have been engaged. I am sure that



you will obey me when we are married, Helen, for whenever you fail in doing so you will break your sacred vow, and I know your tender conscience would not allow you to do that."

"Arthur, you are so kind in making excuses for me that it takes away all the humiliation of confession. But here is a terrible fault for any lady to have: I am neat, yet I am not orderly. I put things down just wherever I happen to be, and quite often I have to search for them several hours because they are not in their proper places."

"Yes, darling, that is a very bad habit, and it is one which is apt to increase as a person grows older. A man is obliged to be very methodical in his business, and he dislikes to have his household conducted in a helter-skelter, Mrs. Jellyby fashion, and frequently he learns to hate such an uncomfortable home, and to seek his happiness elsewhere. But, dearest, you are very young, and I believe that you love me enough to make you struggle against this giant Carelessness, with his hundred arms, and bravely conquer him. Will you not begin to-morrow, Helen, for my sake?"

"I will commence to-night, dear Arthur. I am so glad I told you of this fault, for your dislike of it will give me an incentive to overcome it. I think I have a brighter prospect



for happiness than any girl I know, for I will have a husband who will be strong enough for me to lean upon morally as well as physically."

"Helen, you must not fall into the error that your last remark implies. God knows that I wish it was true, but He has given women equal, if not greater, moral strength than men, and society has thrown such safeguards around the fair sex. Nine-tenths of the men I know who are at all religious are greatly influenced in such matters by their wives. Do you not remember the lines:

" 'And God, who made man's body strong,  
Made also the woman's soul' ?

"I think that men should try very hard to select for their wives ladies whose faith is pure and steadfast, as your is, my *dearest* Helen."

As the autumn days grew cooler, Herbert began to suffer a great deal with his old complaint. The Wades and the Rosses vied with each other in taking care of him during the day while Helen was busy, but she felt that it was her duty to relieve them in the evening. She exchanged rooms with the boy, so that he could have a fire, and she asked Dr. Hern-don if he would be willing to sit there when he called to see her.



"Certainly, Helen, I am going to try to be as unselfish as yourself."

"It hardly seems right that you should give up your pleasure for me," said Herbert the first evening they spent with him; "for of course, as you are lovers, you would prefer to be alone. But you must not mind me, for I am only a little boy, and you can say what you please before me."

"We have been engaged so long, Herbert, that there is very little of importance that we have not said to each other,"—Helen blushed as she spoke,—“and we take so many walks and drives in the afternoon that we will have ample time to finish saying anything we have forgotten, so you must not feel that you are in our way.”

"I will try not to do so, Miss Helen. Doctor, Miss Lucy Wade has just finished telling me the fairy tale called 'The Three Wishes.' Now suppose you could make three wishes, what would they be?"

"In the first place," the Doctor said, speaking slowly, as if he were thinking aloud, "I should wish for this dear little woman to marry me," taking Helen's hand in his and looking lovingly into her eyes. "Next, I should wish to be a rich man worth millions of dollars, and then, Herbert, I should wish to take you, with my wife, across the Atlantic



Ocean, and consult with the specialists in Paris about your case, and have you get well."

"Thank you, Doctor. And what would your wishes be, Miss Helen?"

"The same as Dr. Herndon's, Herbert."

"I am much obliged to you, Miss Helen. Do you think the trip to Paris would do me any good, Doctor?"

"It might prolong your life, Herbert."

"Oh, if the fairy would only give us the wishes!" the little fellow said with a sigh.

"Oh, if Herbert's grandfather had only answered papa's letter!" thought Helen.



## CHAPTER XII

### A TURN OF FORTUNE'S WHEEL

"Fortune came smiling to my youth and woo'd it,  
And purpled greatness met my ripened years."  
DRYDEN.

**I**N the mean time, let us see what had become of Colonel Demoville's letter to Sir Hilary Herbert in behalf of his destitute daughter and her children.

When Helen asked her father about it, he did not think it necessary to tell her that he had carried it around in his pocket several weeks before he had recollected to put it in the mail-box.

"Dear me!" he said, one morning when he was searching for a lost document, "if here is not that letter to Sir Hilary Herbert, and it might have reached its destination by this time if it had been mailed as soon as it was written. However, I will not tell Helen that I forgot it, for she would think that she had a very careless old father, and that would distress her for nothing, poor little girl, and she has enough trouble now. Besides, other men frequently do the same, and I do not suppose that a few weeks' delay in receiving the letter will make any difference."



He never found out what harm his neglect caused, for before the letter was read by Sir Hilary, the turf was growing over the Colonel's grave.

The good ship which carried that letter across the waves of the Atlantic Ocean reached its destination in due time, and the next post took it to Sir Hilary Herbert's castle, but the person to whom it was addressed lay tossing from side to side on a bed of pain. Reason had deserted her throne, for a very severe attack of brain fever had set in, and the physicians in attendance despaired of the old gentleman's life.

A week before this time, Sir Hilary's grandson and heir, a fine lad of sixteen, had gone sailing on a lake in sight of the castle. The act was done in direct opposition to the wish of his grandfather, who had strictly forbidden young Hilary to go upon the water, because, on the day of the boy's birth, his father had been drowned in this same lake by the capsizing of a small sailing vessel.

This prohibition had always made Hilary quite anxious to enjoy a sail upon the water. How he envied the other boys when he saw them bathing, swimming and sailing on the lake! It seemed to him that this was the one pleasure worth having, and that life without it was not worth living.

"Grandfather is in his dotage, and there-



fore he is unreasonable," was Hilary's way of arguing. "There is no sense in thinking that a fellow will get drowned if he ever goes upon the water, merely because his father happened to meet with that sad fate ever so many years ago. I do not see any reason in it, and the first time I get a chance, I am going to show the old fellow that I can go upon the water like other people."

The opportunity came not long afterwards, one sunny morning in April. Hilary's tutor was suffering with a headache and was lying down, so he allowed the boy to take his customary walk alone. As might be supposed, Hilary sauntered to the shore of the lake which had such a wonderful fascination for him. There he found a small boat with sails, which had been left there by some boys the previous afternoon.

"This is the best chance for a sail on the lake that I have ever had, or in all probability will ever have again," thought Hilary. "My tutor is sick and out of the way; the sail-boat is here as if the fairies had provided it for me; the sky is clear and the water is as smooth as glass, so there is no danger of a storm, and there is no one around to tell my grandfather, so the dearest wish of my life will be gratified."

As he stepped lightly into the boat, whis-



ting the liveliest air he knew, how could he tell that Sir Hilary was watching every movement he made?

From his seat in the observatory of the castle the old gentleman could survey the entire surface of the lake with his field glass. He recognized his grandson from that distance by some peculiarity in his dress, and as soon as he saw the boy get into the boat he became alarmed and sent a trusty servant to the shore to tell Hilary to come back to the land. Although the messenger ran every step of the way, the boat had gone too far for his voice to be heard when he shouted. Yet that did not make much difference in the result, for the wind was blowing in the opposite direction and carrying the little boat across the lake, and Hilary knew nothing whatever of steering.

Sir Hilary saw his servant leap into a skiff and row out into the lake. Then there arose a sudden and violent gale of wind, and, before his horrified eyes, Hilary's boat gave a lurch and sank to the bottom of the lake. The boy must have been caught in the sails and held down, for his body did not rise until they fired a cannon on the shore.

When Sir Hilary witnessed the dreadful calamity which befell his disobedient grandson he fell from his seat in a swoon. The



servants took him up tenderly and carried him to his bed, where he lay for many days as utterly unconscious as if he had been dead.

Then a high fever set in, and his ravings began.

"The last of my race," he would mutter, "the last of my race! The name of Hilary Herbert will die with me. My son bore it and he was drowned. Then my grandson was called for me, and the waters have seized him. Oh, there is a bitter, bitter curse upon my lineage!"

Day and night he repeated these words without cessation or variation. The physician who had charge of the case summoned the best medical skill that London and Paris afforded. The doctors' countenances assumed very grave expressions when they saw the extremely critical condition of their patient.

"Undoubtedly, most men of eighty years of age would succumb to this serious attack of illness; but with Sir Hilary's constitution of iron he may rally and live several months longer," the most learned of them all ventured his opinion, when the others had decided that he would die during this attack.

The fever raged for weeks; then it left Sir Hilary pale, weak, and as emaciated as a living skeleton. The light of intelligence gleamed in his eyes, but for many days he did not utter one word.



His strength came gradually back to him after weeks of the most careful nursing, but the attendants dared not speak to him of business matters for a long time. At last he awoke one morning stronger than usual, and he told his servant to send for the young lawyer who attended to his affairs.

"Parker," said Sir Hilary as they shook hands, "I have had quite a close call, but the Lord has given me a short time longer to prepare for death; for what reason I cannot tell, for there is no one to come after me, and the estate will revert to the Crown at last, I am afraid," sighing as he spoke. "However, I want to get everything into as good order as possible before I leave this world. Will you get all the letters that have accumulated during my illness and read them to me?"

"Certainly, Sir Hilary."

There was quite a large package of them, and as Mr. Parker opened and read each one he made a memorandum of what the old gentleman wished him to answer.

"This one has an American stamp and postmark, Sir Hilary," said Mr. Parker, as he ran his penknife across the upper edge of the last one.

"I have no correspondents across the water, Parker," the old gentleman said testily. "I had a daughter who married in opposition to my will and went to live in New York



City, but I always made it a point of returning her letters unopened, and, as she has not written for years, I supposed that she was dead. What is the signature to the letter?"

"Arthur F. Demoville, Sir Hilary."

"I have an indistinct recollection, Parker, of a boy of that name who was educated at a college near here. I think his parents lived in France. Read me what he has written."

In a low, impressive tone Mr. Parker read the stirring appeal to the hard-hearted father in behalf of his suffering daughter and her innocent children.

"My God! to think that my Alice is living still, and that she and her family are enduring the cruel pangs of poverty while I have more money than I can spend!" cried Sir Hilary. "And to think that my child should have forgiven my harsh treatment of her sufficiently to call her only son for her father, 'Hilary Herbert Lee'! After all, I shall not be the last of the name. Why can I not send for the boy, make him drop the hated name of Lee, and leave him my property with the title? How long has it been since that letter was written, Parker?"

"Nearly six months, Sir Hilary."

"My God! I am afraid that I shall never see my Alice again, for she was so ill with consumption when this letter was writ-



ten, and her mother died so soon after she was taken sick! Parker, the children must be living still in poverty, and I intend to send and have them brought here, and I will try to make amends to them for the cruel way in which I treated my daughter. Do you think you could find a trustworthy person to go across for them and bring them back immediately? ”

“ I cannot recollect any one whom I could recommend just now, Sir Hilary. Perhaps, in the course of time, I might find the right man.”

“ Parker, how would you like to go to America yourself? ”

“ Sir Hilary, that has been the day-dream of my life.”

“ Suppose I should pay your expenses, and give you a good salary for the time you spend in traveling, and consider that you have done me a great favor in going, Parker? ”

“ I will go for you with the greatest pleasure, Sir Hilary.”

“ You are the man of all others that I would select, Parker, for I have the most implicit confidence in your judgment and integrity, and you have neither wife nor child to leave behind and make you uneasy if you should be detained longer than you expect. How could you manage about your business? ”



"My partner, Mr. Laws, could attend to that."

"That is true, I had forgotten him. I am growing old, you see, and losing my memory. When can you sail for America, Parker?"

"I shall be ready to-morrow, Sir Hilary."

"I thank you, my good friend, for being so very prompt. I am anxious to give my blessing to my grandson 'before I go hence and am forgotten'; and something within warns me that my new lease on life will be a short one, and haste is needful in such a desperate case as mine. Would you not advise me to have my will written in favor of my grandson before you leave, Parker?"

"It would certainly be advisable, Sir Hilary."

"Then you and your partner had better make two copies of the will to-day, bequeathing all my worldly possessions to my young grandson, Hilary Herbert Lee, on condition that he shall take my name and title. Bring both of them for me to sign early to-morrow morning, for I shall feel stronger then, and there will still be time for you to catch the train for Liverpool. Have the will duly recorded, and take the copy to the boy. Make out any credentials you think necessary and I will attach my signature to them. Carry Demoville's letter with you, and draw on my London bankers for all the funds you need."



The amount of salary Mr. Parker was to receive for his services was settled between them, and then he went to his office and carried out Sir Hilary's instructions. The next morning the old gentleman signed the wills with a weak, trembling hand in the presence of three witnesses.

"Good-by, Parker," he said in a tremulous voice; "I am afraid that I shall never see you again, for I feel worse to-day. You have always attended faithfully to my business, and it is a comfort to me to know that my last wishes will be carried out to the letter."

"Good-by, Sir Hilary. I hope, if it should be God's will, that we may meet again."

They shook hands, and Mr. Parker left for Liverpool, which he reached just in time to engage passage on a steamship which was bound for the port in which the Lees lived, to get a cargo of cotton.

Howard Parker enjoyed the voyage from the moment of embarkation to that of landing. He was young and full of life and spirits, and he had not taken a holiday for several years. He appreciated the opportunity which Fortune had so unexpectedly offered him for seeing something of the world outside of Queen Victoria's dominion. There was much warmth and cordiality in his manners, which rendered him very fascinating to



all classes of society; consequently he made friends with every one on board of the vessel, from the Captain down to a smutty little boot-black who was going to "Hamerica" to try his fortune. The sailors vied with each other in explaining all the different parts of the ship to the handsome young gentleman who spoke so kindly to them.

As to the passengers, they were unanimously of the opinion that there was no one in the world like Mr. Parker. His conversation was witty and agreeable; he was the life of every game that was started; he was extremely polite and attentive to the elderly persons, and very amusing and entertaining to the children; and if any one happened to be in trouble or distress, he was invariably on hand to help and relieve him to the extent of his ability. In fact, they did not see how they could have gotten along without his presence.

Captain Travis shook hands with him warmly when they parted.

"Mr. Parker, I never carried a passenger on my ship whom I liked better than yourself," he said. "You must be sure to return with me. Next year I am going to quit this company and buy a vessel of my own, and then, my dear fellow," clapping him on the shoulder, "I will take you around the world with me, and it shall not cost you a cent; and



I will take your bride, too, if you are sensible enough to marry by that time."

"I cannot find a lady who will accept me, Captain," said Mr. Parker, laughing and blushing.

"That is nonsense in a handsome young man like you! Why, have I not observed how popular you were with the girls on board the ship? You can save that fib to tell to the marines."

"I took you for one of the marines," said the young man, smiling.

"Well, I declare, Parker, you have got the best of me again! but you just wait, partner, until the return trip and see if I do not get even with you."

"Which is the best hotel here, Captain Travis?"

"I like the St. James the best."

"Very well, I will go there then. You must let me know when you will be ready to sail again. Good morning, sir."

As soon as he had registered his name, Mr. Parker asked the clerk if he knew a gentleman named Demoville who was in the cotton business in that city.

"Do you mean Colonel A. F. Demoville, sir? I knew him, but he has been dead for several months."

"Is it possible? I came over from England to transact some business with him. If



his office is still open, I might find some one there who could give me the information I desire."

"The office is now occupied by a new firm," said the clerk. "You see, sir, the Colonel's bookkeeper stole a lot of his money and ran away with it, and it ruined the old gentleman financially, and broke his heart and crushed the life out of him, and he just gave up and died."

"That is very sad indeed. Did he leave a family?"

"Only one daughter, sir, as pretty a young lady as your eyes ever beheld."

"Can you tell me where she is at present?" Mr. Parker asked eagerly; then seeing a rather queer smile on the clerk's countenance he added, "I am not so much interested in her beauty—although, naturally, I like to look at a lovely face—as I am in finding out whether she can give me the address of a family by the name of Lee of whom I am in search."

"Well, sir, I am afraid that I cannot tell you where Miss Demoville is just now. Last winter she was quite a belle among our young men, and I recollect that she was to have taken the principal part in the opera of 'Martha,' which was performed at our theater for the benefit of this same Lee family of whom you speak, and I attended the affair;



but at the conclusion of the first act Miss Demoville was summoned to the bedside of Mrs. Lee, who was dying, and her friend, Miss Laura Houston, acted as her substitute for the entertainment."

"So the mother is dead," thought Mr. Parker. "Can you tell me, sir, where I can find Miss Houston?" he said, aloud.

"I cannot, sir. The family went to the Springs in the summer, and I have not heard of their return to the city."

"Well, sir, can you not think of some other friend of the Demoville or of the Lee family? Sir Hilary Herbert, who is the grandfather of these young Lees, is quite anxious to have them come over to England and visit him before he dies, and his life hangs by a slender thread, and he has made his will in favor of his grandson, and will leave him an immense estate."

"Is it possible? It seems to me that I saw the announcement of the death of Miss Lee in one of our papers during the summer, and some one remarked that there was only a little lame boy left of the family, and that he might have to go to the poorhouse, as he objected to the orphan asylum, and Miss Demoville had no means left with which to take care even of herself. Speaking of the poorhouse reminds me of a gentleman who might be able to help you in finding this Lee boy, for I recollect



that it was he who came to take Miss Demoville to Mrs. Lee's death-bed the night of the opera, and they said he was the physician who attended the Lee family. His name is Herndon, and he holds the office of County Physician and has charge of the poorhouse. If the boy is there he can take you right to him, or at any rate he can tell you where to find him. I will get my hat and show you the way to his office now, as I am not busy."

"Is Dr. Herndon in?" he asked of the colored boy who sat in the door of the office.

"Naw, suh, he done gone ter de po'house, an' he don't neber come back 'ere tell pitch dark," he replied, showing his ivories.

"Well, Mr. Parker, as you seem to be in a hurry about this matter, your best plan would be to eat your dinner and then take a carriage and go out to our County Asylum."

"Thank you for your kindness, sir," replied Mr. Parker.

As he rode along the beautiful wide avenue shaded on either side by large oaks, Mr. Parker admired the home-like appearance of the houses surrounded by fine lawns of orchard grass, dotted with clusters of bright autumn flowers, geraniums, dahlias, roses and zinnias; but what attracted his attention most were the orange trees with their golden fruit gleaming among the glossy green leaves. There were also tall banana plants with their



huge foliage, and Spanish bayonets, date palms, century aloes and other natives of the sub-tropics.

The scenery was so picturesque and the ride was so pleasant that Mr. Parker felt sorry when the driver stopped at the gate of a large farm and announced:

"This is our County Asylum, sir. Would you mind walking up to the house while I rest my horses a bit out here?"

"Of course not," Mr. Parker said with alacrity. "I get tired of sitting so long, especially as I have just taken a long sea voyage."

In front of the main house and the cabins was a pretty lawn and flowers, but the ground between them and the gate, some ten or twelve acres in area, was laid off in long rows of sweet potatoes, with a view to utility rather than beauty. An old woman who wore a pink sunbonnet was stooping over the vines. She stared at Mr. Parker as he took off his hat and said:

"Good morning, madam. Can you tell me whether a boy named Hilary Herbert Lee is living here?"

"No, sir; ther' ain't nair sich er feller here, though ther' like to 'a' be'n. I 'lowed ter bring 'im 'long er me w'en I come 'ere, but Miss 'Moville, she wouldn't 'gree ter hit, though I hed be'n er keepin' charge er the



chile ever sence 'is mar died. She 'lowed she wus er gwine ter tek keer er 'im, but the Lord knows how she's er gwine ter do hit, 'ca'se 'er par's dead an' 'e never lef' 'er a nickel. My name's Eleanor Ioly Peniny Piminty Burns, an' ef yer want ter see Miss 'Moville an' Herbert Lee I kin jis' git in the kerridge with yer an' ride back ther' an' show yer wher' they live, I'm sich er po' han' ter rikillic names er streets."

"Excuse me, madam," Mr. Parker's native politeness made it difficult for him to refuse the offer, "but I see a gentleman driving toward us; can you tell me whether it is the physician in charge of the asylum?"

"Yes, hit's Dr. Hairndon."

Mr. Parker went up to the side of the buggy.

"Dr. Herndon, I believe. My name is Parker," handing his card to the Doctor. "I am an English barrister, and I have come over the water in search of a family of Lees, whom I have been told you attended."

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Parker." Dr. Herndon shook hands cordially with him. "Yes, I attended the family; but the mother and the daughter have been dead several months, and there is only the little boy, Herbert, left."

"Sir Hilary Herbert, this boy's grandfather, employed me to come to this city and



take Herbert Lee to England to enter into possession of a very large estate."

"Is it possible? I am delighted to hear of the little fellow's good fortune," looking at the letter and credentials Mr. Parker handed him. "I think it best that I should break the news to him to-night. His health is so bad that the unexpected tidings might give him a shock. If you will call at my office to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, Mr. Parker," giving him a card, "it will give me pleasure to take you to see the boy."

"Thank you, Dr. Herndon, I will accept your kind offer. Good afternoon, sir."



## CHAPTER XIII

### WEDDING BELLS

“Marriage, rightly understood,  
Gives to the tender and the good  
A Paradise below.”

NATHANIEL COTTON

**W**HEN Dr. Herndon went that night to tell Herbert of the good fortune that had happened to him, the door of his room was open, and as the Doctor hung his hat upon the rack in the hall, he heard the boy's voice saying:

“Yes, Miss Helen, the pain is very great, sometimes, but I try to think that it is the cross of Christ that I am bearing, like Simon the Cyrenian, and then, somehow, it grows easier, as if our Saviour came and took part of the burden on His own shoulders.”

Dr. Herndon listened with his head bowed in reverence to these words of calm and holy resignation, then he said:

“May I come in, my dear little martyr, and bring you some very glad tidings?”

“Yes, Doctor, you are always welcome,” shaking hands with him. “But what is the good news? I did not think there would ever



be any more for me until the angels came to take me to heaven and my mother and my sister."

"But this is of an earthly nature," said the Doctor, as he shook hands with Helen and took a seat. "Do you recollect our three wishes the other night? I think our fairy godmother must have heard them, for the second one is coming true, only the lucky person is you, Herbert."

"Am I to have a fortune? I, a poor little lame boy rescued from the poorhouse by the charity of Miss Helen and yourself? Dr. Herndon, you must be joking!" Herbert sat up in bed, his eyes gleaming like stars.

"Herbert, I was never more in earnest in my life. You knew that Colonel Demoville had written a letter to your grandfather in England asking his assistance for your mother and her children, did you not?"

"Yes, Doctor, but Miss Helen said that he did not reply."

"Herbert, I met a gentleman to-day who said that he had been sent across the ocean by Sir Hilary Herbert to take you to him, and when your grandfather dies, you will inherit all his vast wealth."

"Oh, mother, if you could have lived until this hour to receive your father's pardon and blessing!" cried Herbert. "But you have greater joys than this in heaven. Oh, Doc-



tor, it makes me feel so sad when I think of leaving you and Miss Helen and my kind friends in America. Must it be so?"

"My dear Herbert, it is so greatly to your interest that I should advise you to go. Think of the advantages you would derive from it, and how your life might be prolonged by consulting those eminent physicians in London and Paris."

"Life is very sweet, Doctor, but I could not go away with an entire stranger. Could you not go away with me?"

"Could I, Helen? How could I leave you, darling?" he whispered.

"It would be very hard for us to part, but I think it is our duty to do what we can for this unfortunate child. You could come back in the spring——"

"And marry you, darling," finished the Doctor. "I would do that at all hazards, you may be sure."

"I should not want to be so selfish as to separate you lovers," said Herbert. "Why could you not marry Miss Helen, Doctor, and take her along with us?"

"Why not, Helen?" Dr. Herndon's delight at the boy's bright idea was apparent.

"There is no reason, except that I am afraid that I could not get my trousseau ready in time."

"Oh, you would need so little for the voy-



age, and you could get the rest so much better in Paris," urged the Doctor.

"You are right, as usual, Arthur, but we must not form any plans until we consult this English gentleman. What is his name, and when shall we see him?"

"His name is Parker, and he will call at my office to-morrow morning at ten. I am going to bring him out in my buggy then to see you, Herbert, and we can talk it all over then."

"Well, Doctor, you can tell him for me that I will not go a foot with him unless you and Miss Helen go, too, and he can send a dispatch to my grandfather, and bring the answer with him when he comes, for that will save time."

"If that is your decision, Herbert, I had better say good-night and go and tell the gentleman so that he can make his arrangements about sending the dispatch by cable."

In after years Dr. Herndon always spoke of himself as being, like Mahomet's coffin, suspended between earth and heaven while he was waiting for Mr. Parker to receive his reply. At length he came into the Doctor's office with a yellow envelope in his hand, and his face wore a grave expression.

"I have sad news from England," he said.

"Sir Hilary Herbert died yesterday."

"Then the boy will never see his grand-



father. What effect will this have on his prospects?" asked Dr. Herndon.

"He will come into possession of an immense estate as soon as he arrives in England and has his name changed. You can read this copy of the will."

"That is an immense amount of property for a boy to hold in his own right," said the Doctor, when he had finished the perusal.

"Yes, from this moment he can have every earthly wish gratified."

"Including the one he has expressed, of having myself and bride accompany him to his new home?"

"Certainly; and you can live there with him always if you will. You could get a fine practice around the castle, if you should like."

"I should, indeed, Mr. Parker. No man likes to give up his independence, and of course you understand that I am making some sacrifices in leaving my home and country."

"I do, indeed, Dr. Herndon, and the boy should appreciate your unselfishness."

"He is very grateful, Mr. Parker, for everything we do for him. But I have a mother and a sister dependent upon me, and I should have to take them, also, with me."

"There is room at the castle for all, sir; and as to means, they are almost unlimited."

"Of course, Mr. Parker, I should only want a loan of enough money to pay our way



over, and to keep us from actual want until I get some patients around the castle."

"Dr. Herndon, you are entirely too unselfish and noble for this wicked world of ours," replied Mr. Parker. "Of course, I like you all the better for being so, but, as you are going entirely for the benefit of the boy, and he has more money than he can possibly use upon himself, I insist upon his paying your expenses for several years to come without any return. If he is the right sort of a fellow he will be sure to do it."

"Oh, he has an excellent disposition. Come with me and see for yourself. I wish to introduce you to my affianced wife, Miss Demoville."

"So this is the future Sir Hilary Herbert. My dear boy, I am glad to meet you," said Mr. Parker as he shook hands cordially with the lad.

"I am Herbert Lee, sir. Why do you not call me by my real name, Mr. Parker?"

"Because I have just received the sad intelligence of the death of your grandfather, who was a life-long friend of mine, and you are to inherit his name and his title, as well as his large fortune, in accordance with his will, which I shall now proceed to read."

"It seems like a dream," said Herbert, rubbing his eyes when Mr. Parker had finished. "Are you sure that I am not asleep?"



"I am certainly a flesh and blood man; feel my arm and see; it is pretty solid, is it not? Well, you know they do not have men like that in dreams."

"Will you let me take Miss Helen and the Doctor, Mr. Parker? For I tell you now, sir, I will stay in America if they cannot go."

"Yes, Dr. Herndon and I have arranged all that, and he wishes his mother and his sister to accompany him."

"Hurrah for that!" cried Herbert, clapping his hands. "'So we will all live happily ever afterwards,' as the fairy tales say."

"This little lady pleads for time to make her arrangements for traveling," said the Doctor, who had been conversing in the hall with Helen. "Now that Sir Hilary is dead, is there any necessity for our leaving so soon, Mr. Parker?"

"We can take our time, Doctor. I should prefer seeing some of the beauties of this continent before I return to England—Niagara Falls, the Natural Bridge and the Mammoth Cave, for instance. How long a holiday can you give me for the purpose, Miss Demoville?"

"I think that you could spend three weeks pleasantly in travel, Mr. Parker, and my preparations could be made in that time. You must be sure to return for our wedding, which



will take place on the twenty-fifth. It will be a very quiet little affair at home," with a glance at her heavy mourning dress; "but, as we are to be friends and neighbors in England, I am especially desirous of your presence."

"Yes, Mr. Parker, you must be sure to attend. Will you have any bridesmaids, Helen?"

"I thought I would invite your sister Leila and my friend Laura Houston, Doctor."

"Mr. Parker, will you officiate as my best man?"

"Thank you, Doctor. I appreciate the honor of your invitation, and it will give me great pleasure to accept. I wish to remain in your beautiful city for a few days before we sail, and visit all the places of interest, so I will return a few days before the wedding. I should like to be introduced to your sister, the young lady with whom, I suppose, I am to wait."

There was a great deal to be done during the next few weeks, but with the assistance of several dressmakers and the Wades and Rosses everything was completed before the time appointed, and Helen had an opportunity to call on a few of her most intimate friends, and invite them to attend her wedding.

Mammy was greatly distressed when she



heard that Helen was going to live in England.

"Is yer gwine away, honey, an' leab yer po' ol' Mammy all erlone by 'erse'f in dis great big Nunited States? No, yer ain' gwine do nuffin' er de kin', 'ca'se Mammy gwine 'long wid yer."

"Mammy, would you be willing to leave all your people and go away across the ocean and live and die there?"

"Ain' got no people, honey; nobody 't all but you. I kin dror my money out de bank, an' pay my way, an' I won't lose not'in' 't all 'cep'in' w'at I paid de S'iety, an' dat kin go ter bury some po' nigger w'at ain' got no kin ner w'ite folks. 'Erbe't, don't you want Mammy ter go 'long an' tek keer er yer? 'Ca'se I tells yer, chile, de Doctor an' Miss Helen ain' gwine hab no eyes fer nobody 'cep'in' demselves, a'ter Dr. Mark'un tie dat knot. Mammy know! He, he!"

"Yes, Mammy, I would like to have you first-rate, if Mr. Parker is willing."

"Yo' 'ead is chock full er sense, honey, 'ca'se yer ain' no po' w'ite trash. Mammy said so fus' time she eber seed yer. I gwine ask dat Englishman ter let me go, jes' de fus' time I lay mer eyes on 'im."

It happened that she was the first one to see him when he got out of the carriage, when he returned from his American tour.



Mammy darted forward like a deer, fell down before Mr. Parker, and clasped him around the knees.

"I wants ter go wid dese people de wo'st in de worl'. Please, Marse Englishmun, say yais an' le' me go."

"I have no objections if they want you to go," said Mr. Parker, slightly embarrassed at her importunity.

"T'ank 'e, mas'er; you sholy is er Christian gent'mun. Glory, glory, glory hallelujah!" She leaped into the air, and clapped her hands and shouted until she disappeared around the side of the house.

That evening the wedding took place, and every guest present thought it was the prettiest little affair they had ever witnessed. The bride looked exquisitely lovely in her dress of white silk, the same she had worn in "Martha," with her veil of white illusion and wreath of orange flowers, and Mrs. Lee's diamond cross flashing on her bosom, a wedding present from Herbert. She and the Doctor stood under a marriage bell of flowers suspended from the chandelier, and on either side were the attendants, Laura Houston and Mr. Wallace, and Leila Herndon and Mr. Parker, both of the girls looking very charming in their costumes of white silk mull.

The ceremony was followed by the con-



gratulations of their friends, and then the company partook of cake and wine. The bride disappeared for a short time, and when they saw her again she had donned a neat traveling suit to wear on a little bridal tour which the Doctor had planned, as the vessel would not be ready to sail for several days.

When the couple had said good-by to their friends and had driven off toward the depot, Mammy ran after them and threw an old shoe "fer luck," which fell on the top of the carriage and created much merriment.

They reached New Orleans in a few hours, and spent several days in sightseeing in this "Paris of America." Helen was charmed with the old French market with its picturesque arrangement of edibles and wares of all sorts and its Babel of tongues.

They returned just in time to sail for England. Miss Lucy Wade and Miss Nettie Ross came down to the vessel to say farewell, and they parted in tears.

"We shall meet again, I am sure," sobbed Helen. "It would break my heart if I thought that I should never see the friends who have been so kind to me in my distress. As soon as the Doctor gets a good practice I am going to send you both tickets to come over and pay me a long visit."

Then they steamed out of the harbor, wav-



ing their handkerchiefs to their friends on shore.

From the beginning to the end the trip was a most delightful one. The weather was just right, neither too warm nor too cold, the passengers were polite and congenial, and the captain saw that they had every comfort.

Herbert's handsome appearance and his misfortune made him attract much attention, and every one with whom he was thrown seemed glad to entertain him as long as he would stay with them. The bracing sea breeze seemed to revive him wonderfully, and he went all over the ship on his crutches, and made friends with the sailors, who told him every yarn they could recollect.

Naturally, the Doctor and his bride were always together and generally alone.

"I hope you will not think that we are very selfish because we do not indulge more in your very agreeable society," Dr. Herndon said apologetically; "but this is our honeymoon, and when I begin my practice in England I may have very little time to spend at home."

Mammy found occupation in taking care of Mrs. Herndon, who suffered from seasickness.

"Honey," she would say to Leila, "let Mammy set 'ere an' nuss yo' mar. Dat leetle



'Erbe't done got so fat an' sassy tell 'e won't let Mammy do nuffin' 't all fer 'im, an' de ol' 'oman hates ter jes' set an' hol' 'er han's, 'ca'se mer ol' mist'ess w'ut's dead an' gone allers use' ter say dat idleness was de ol' Devil's wo'kshop. You jes' go 'long, chile, an' 'joy de good breeze an' talk ter dat young Marse Englishmun. He look so lonesome settin' dar by hisse'f. He settin' dar hol'in' de newspaper 'fore he face, but Mammy kin see he ain' readin', 'ca'se one eye strayin' ober dis yer way all de time. He cyarn't fool dis chil'. He, he!"

With the keen intuition of her race, Mammy had discovered Mr. Parker's secret. He had fallen in love with the beautiful Miss Herndon as they were being introduced, and he considered every moment spent in her presence as a golden holiday. There was an air of modest reserve about her, the consequence of her having mingled so little in society, which enhanced her charms in the eyes of Queen Victoria's subject, yet it made him tremble for his fate, for she never gave him a word or a sign that he could construe into encouragement.

"She has less of the flirt about her than any lady I ever met," he thought, "and yet her very coldness renders her more attractive to me. I fear I am growing cowardly, for although we are alone for hours at a time, yet



I can never gather courage to tell her I love her."

One moonlight night, when they were seated on deck together and there was no one in sight, Mr. Parker took Leila's hand in his own, and told her of his love.

"You love me?" cried the young lady in astonishment. "Why, I never dreamed of such a thing! I thought you were merely polite to me because we were the only young people on board."

"But can you not try to love me in return?"

"I might. Already I admire your character very much, and I know that my brother and his wife esteem you very highly."

"When can you give me an answer?"

"In a week, perhaps. Such matters require reflection."

"Oh, a week is too long! I should be in torture all that time for fear you were going to reject me. Think over it well to-night, look into your heart, and see if you find my image there is dearer to you than all the world beside, as yours is to me, dear Leila, and let me know your decision at breakfast to-morrow."

"But how can I, before all those people?"

"If we were on land I should ask you to wear a white rose in token of acceptance; but as that is impossible, if I see this ring on



your hand," slipping one from his own finger, "it will make me the happiest man on earth."

With such a momentous question to decide, Leila slept little that night, and she awoke from a dream of her lover early the next morning.

"I believe that I have loved Mr. Parker from the moment we met," she thought; "but of course I could not acknowledge it even to myself until he had made a declaration. Dear little ring, how I love you! I will wear you now and until the last moment of my existence."

Mr. Parker's face beamed with happiness as he saw his solitaire glittering on the fair hand across the breakfast table.

"Will you join me in a promenade on deck, Miss Leila?" he asked when the meal was concluded.

"In half an hour, Mr. Parker," she replied with a most becoming blush.

"Old fellow, I congratulate you," whispered a voice in his ear as he felt a slap on his shoulder.

"Captain Travis, what do you mean?"

"Don't be startled, but I understood the meaning of your ring changing hands. Of course it was unintentional, but I went into my berth near which you were sitting last night just in time to hear the last sentence of



your conversation with Miss Herndon, so I cannot help understanding the situation, and I spoke of it in order to offer you the use of my private parlor," he unlocked the door as he spoke, "where you two can make all your arrangements for an early wedding without being overheard, as you were last night. 'All the world loves a lover,' and I was one myself when I was a young man."

"I appreciate your kindness so highly, Captain Travis," shaking his hand warmly. "This will expedite matters so much."

"I am afraid from the way you look now that you will not wait for my ship to take you all over the world on your wedding tour."

"You are very right, Captain. I am going to try to persuade Miss Herndon to marry me in Paris, as it will be better for us to go there immediately for the purpose of consulting the physicians about Herbert Lee's case; and, if I am not mistaken in the young lady's disposition, I shall succeed."

Mr. Parker was right, for it was an easy matter to get Leila and her mother and her brother to consent.

"I liked you from the first, Parker," said the Doctor, "and there is no man to whom I would rather have my sister married."

They spent a very delightful month in Paris, during which time Mr. Parker and



Leila were quietly married in a pretty little church.

Herbert underwent a painful but very successful operation while there, and the physicians who attended him prescribed a course of treatment which might prolong his life five years.

"No longer?" asked Dr. Herndon.

"Nevair," said Dr. Maupres, shaking his head. "Ze blood poi-son weel set in theen and keel 'im."

"Let us make those years as happy for the little fellow as possible, Helen," Dr. Herndon said to his wife.

"I will endeavor to do so, Arthur. Dear child, I will carry a pain in my heart whenever I think that we will have to give him up so soon, for I love him dearly for his own sake, and because he was the indirect means of bringing us together, Arthur."

"Yes, Helen, it was your conduct toward the Lee family which revealed to me your nobility of character and made me desire to marry you; and I assure you that I have not been disappointed in you, my precious little wife."



## CHAPTER XIV

### IN PEACE BENEATH THE PEACEFUL SKIES

"Thrice happy world, where gilded toys  
No more disturb our thoughts, no more pollute our  
joys!

There light and shade no more succeed by turns,  
There reigns the eternal with unclouded ray;  
There all is calm as night, yet all immortal day,  
And truth forever shines, and love forever burns."

ISAAC WATTS.

**T**IME flies so rapidly when one is happy," said Dr. Herndon. "Can you realize, dear wife, that we have been married five years, to-day?"

"I should find it much harder, dearest, if we did not have these precious landmarks," replied Helen, patting the curly heads of their robust little sons, Arthur, aged four, and Herbert, two years younger. "But it has been the most delightful period of my life. With the exception of your dear mother's death, Arthur, there has been absolutely nothing to mar our happiness."

"Yes, Helen, we have been singularly blessed, and I feel very grateful to our Heavenly Father for His goodness toward us."



"Do you know, dearest, that your becoming so religious has increased my happiness more than anything else?"

"Thank you, little wife. Fully half the credit of that belongs to you. A good woman has so much influence with a man, when he loves her with his whole heart. I have often wondered, Helen, that you were not afraid to trust your fate in the hands of one who thought so little of religion as I did before we were married."

"'Love hopeth all things,' Arthur; and I remembered you always in my prayers, from the time when I became conscious of my devotion to you."

"Helen, our first-born son shows already such great earnestness in saying his little prayers. Let us dedicate him to the service of God."

"Arthur, that has been the dearest wish of my life ever since his birth, but I dared not mention it to you, fearing that you might not approve."

"I hope that the good Lord will accept our offering as an atonement for my neglect of Him in my youth. Now, dear wife, can you guess what I have selected for your anniversary present?"

"Let me see, Arthur, you have given me everything possible in silver and jewelry for my wedding, birthday and Christmas pres-



ents. The fifth anniversary is for wood; perhaps it is a rocking-chair."

"No, Helen," said the Doctor, laughing, "it is not of wood, although it, or rather they, came over from America in a wooden vessel. I will tell you, my dear wife. I have noticed, since my mother died and Leila and Mr. Parker moved to London with their little girls, that you have been too much alone while I was attending to my practice, although our children were very bright and lively, and Mammy gave you all the help she could in nursing Herbert Lee,"—they called him by his old name because he did not wish them to use his title, and they had to distinguish the two Herberts,—“and so, my darling, I sent for two of your friends to come over from America and stay with you as long as they would."

"Dear Arthur, you could not have pleased me better. I know without asking you that these friends are Miss Lucy Wade and Miss Nettie Ross."

"Yes, Helen. It would have been a pity to ask one without the other, as they have been inseparable companions so long. I wrote and asked Dr. Markham to deliver the invitation in your name and mine, and he replied saying that they accepted it without a moment's hesitation. In fact, he said that it seemed as if our asking the ladies had been



instigated by Providence, as it must have been, I think, for all the other members of the two families died since we left there, and these ladies had sold their dear old home, where we were married, to pay the bills of the doctors, druggists, and undertakers, and they were having a hard struggle to make a bare living with their needles, for their eyesight is beginning to fail. The Doctor kindly made all the arrangements for their sailing, and they came across the Atlantic in Captain Travis's vessel. They landed in Liverpool yesterday, and I sent the carriage to the depot for them this morning. They ought to be here by this time. Yes," looking out of the window, "here they come now."

The ladies waved their handkerchiefs from the carriage windows, and Helen and the Doctor hastened to meet them and give them the heartiest of welcomes.

Mammy, hearing the commotion, ran out to see what was the matter. She clasped the guests around the knees and shouted with delight.

"Now all us 'Merikins done got tergedder once mo', I don' keer w'en Gab'iel blow he trumpet!"

"Let me take you into Herbert's room," said Helen. "My dear boy, do you remember these ladies?"

His face lighted up joyfully.



"Oh, yes, they are Miss Lucy and Miss Nettie!" grasping their hands cordially. "I am ever so glad you came. How did you leave the others?"

"They have all gone home to God, Herbert." Miss Lucy wiped away her tears.

"That is where I am going soon, Miss Lucy, but the thought of it does not make me sad. Oh, no, I rejoice when I think of meeting my mother and father and my sister, and all the others who have gone before, and Jesus and all the angels! Life would be very sweet to me if I could ever hope to be well; but as it is, I bear a very heavy cross here, and up there I shall wear a bright crown. I am so glad you got here before the angels came for me. You were so good to me when I was a little boy at your house, and I know you will read to me now, and sing to me, and pray for me that I may not be afraid to pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death. I love that twenty-third psalm so much. I used to say it every night after my evening prayer, as I knelt down beside my sick mother's bed. You must not think that the thought of going makes me sad. Why, it is perfectly glorious even to think of the joys of heaven; and oh, what must it be to be there!"

His countenance shone with an expression of happiness that made it seem almost angelic.



During the weeks which followed one of the three ladies was with the boy all the time he was not asleep, and they read him all the beautiful descriptions of heaven from the Bible and sang the sweetest hymns they knew to him.

Sometimes Helen could not restrain the tears when she saw Herbert growing paler and weaker and thinner every day.

"Don't cry, Miss Helen," Herbert would say, taking her hands down from her face and kissing her. "It makes my going so much harder to see your distress."

"But you have grown so dear to me, Herbert. I love you almost as much as I do my own children, and it seems so hard that we should be parted."

"It does, Miss Helen, for I love you and the Doctor so dearly. You shared your scant means with me when you were poor, and you kept me from being just a common pauper; besides all that you did for my mother; and I can never express my gratitude for what you have done. When I am gone I want you to live in this beautiful castle always, and have it for your own; and I wish you would keep Miss Lucy and Miss Nettie with you always so that you will not be lonely when I am gone and the Doctor is away. Please let me talk to you about these matters while I can, for soon I shall be too weak. I have one request



to make of you, and I wish that you would get the Doctor's consent, too. You know that my grandfather was anxious that his name should be kept with the title, and on that account I left off my surname. Now, I am going to ask you, as a great favor, if you will not let your little son Herbert, whom you have kindly called for me, take the title of Sir Hilary Herbert? His name could be changed as mine was. Please send for Mr. Parker and get him to write a will, just as he did for my grandfather, leaving everything that I possess to your child, on the condition that he should bear my name. I think this matter should be attended to immediately, while I am able to sign my name."

"The Doctor is coming now, Herbert." Helen saw him through the window. "I will ask him about the matter. Arthur, Herbert wishes us to let his little namesake bear the title of Sir Hilary Herbert, and he desires that Mr. Parker should come immediately and make his will in favor of our child. Are you willing for the change?"

"Certainly, if it will give pleasure to you, Herbert Lee," taking his hand. "But you must not think that you will die any sooner because your will has been made, for I have known persons who lived for years afterwards, contrary to their own expectations and to those of their physicians and their friends."



"I am not so silly as to think that, Doctor. Will you send for Mr. Parker to-day, please? You know it may take him a few days to arrange his business and get here."

"Certainly, Herbert, I will go to the village and send him a dispatch immediately."

"Thank you, Doctor. Now, Miss Helen, will you be so kind as to call Miss Lucy? I wish to ask her about our friends in America. Ah, Miss Lucy, you must have heard me. Please tell me how Dr. Markham looks now, and all about the boys with whom I was in the class, and the church."

"Well, Herbert, Dr. Markham is a little grayer and thinner than he was when you knew him, but his eyes beam as kindly as ever, and he seems to attract persons to him more than ever. The church has grown and improved wonderfully. They have added a number of pews, and they have a very sweet chime of bells. The Sunday-school room has new pictures and maps, and a larger fountain and more flowers. Your old classmates used to crowd around me every Sunday to hear about you, and they never tired of hearing about your new title, and your beautiful castle, and your golden coronet; and they always ended by saying, 'Oh, I hope that Herbert will grow well and strong like us!'"

"Did you ever hear what became of the wicked man who stole Miss Helen's father's money?"



"Mr. Lawrence? Yes, I read in the paper that he had gotten into some trouble in Canada, and had blown his brains out with a pistol. 'The way of the transgressor is hard,' Herbert."

"Did Mrs. Burns stay at the poorhouse long?"

"No," replied Miss Lucy, laughing. "A few days after you left us, she walked into our house and said she had gotten into a difficulty with the superintendent. 'An' them ain't the kind er people I'm allers used ter associatin' with, nohow, an' I jes' ain't er gwine ter stay ther'.' We let her remain with us a while, and then Dr. Markham gave her a room at the Martha Home, and she has had an average of two fusses every week with 'ol' Miss Kannedy.' Sometimes they fight and pull each other's hair. But she always asks about you when I see her, Herbert."

"What became of that pretty lady, Miss Laura Houston, and Mr. Wallace, who waited on Miss Helen when she was married?"

"They followed suit a few months afterwards. They said that standing together before the minister put serious ideas into their heads, and the engagement was made as they drove home from Helen's wedding. I see Dr. Herndon returning, and there is another gentleman in his buggy."

It proved to be Mr. Parker, who had 'just run down from London for a breath of



fresh air,' as he expressed it, and to pay a little visit to his brother-in-law. The will was written and signed in the presence of witnesses during his stay, and Herbert seemed to have a weight taken from his mind when the transaction was completed.

"Grandfather's wish will be carried out, and the name kept up," he said frequently. He loved to keep little Herbert near him, and it was strange to see the child so contented in that dark, quiet room while his brother was romping in the spacious grounds of the castle.

Every day Herbert Lee grew paler and thinner, and the shadow of Death approached closer. Helen never left the boy's bedside unless she was compelled.

"Indulge me in this sad pleasure, will you not, Arthur?" she pleaded with her husband when he remonstrated with her for confining herself so constantly as to injure her health. "I love this boy so dearly that I feel as if when he dies a part of my heart will be buried in his grave."

Herbert seemed to be fully aware of his condition. He was so grateful for every attention paid to him that the entire household took pleasure in waiting upon him.

"You are all so kind to me," he said, "that I can never get an opportunity to ask for anything, for you bring it to me before I am con-



scious that it is needed. Yet all of your tender care cannot prevent my suffering. The pain is excruciating, and I try so hard to bear it without a murmur. The end cannot be very far off now, and it makes me so happy when I think of it. Miss Helen, please try to look upon it as I do, as a blessed release from sin and sorrow and suffering."

Helen bowed her head. She could not speak.

"At the last, Miss Helen, will you not sing to me the same hymns you sang when my mother died?"

"I will, Herbert, if I can control my voice."

A short while afterwards, Dr. Herndon called in a physician from London in consultation. He looked at Herbert and shook his head.

"There is nothing else that can be done for him. He cannot live a week."

They thought it best to break the news to the boy as gently as possible. He received the tidings with gladness.

"In one week I shall be with my mother," he said, clasping his hands together, "and we shall be so happy there that it will seem only a short time until my friends join us in heaven."

Helen read and sang to him most of the time that remained to him on earth. During



his last night he raised up with an angelic smile on his countenance.

"Miss Helen, did you not see her? Did you not hear her? It was mother, and she said, 'You have borne your heavy cross patiently, my child, and I will bring you a very bright crown.'"

He lay in a stupor the rest of the night, but just as the day began to dawn, Herbert smiled and held out his arms, and the watchers around his bedside were certain that the mother and the son clasped each other heart to heart.

Two years have passed since Herbert Lee laid down the cross to wear the crown, and the flowers have been kept always fresh upon his grave.

"Sa-cred to the mem-o-ry of Sir Hil-a-ry Her-bert," spells out little Arthur Herndon. "Why, that is my brother's name! 'Be—thou — faith-ful — un-to — death — and — I — will — give — thee — a — crown — of — life,' " he reads from the base of a handsome rustic cross surmounted by a crown. "My dear mamma, why do you always cry when you come here to put roses on *this* grave? Aunt Lucy says that the boy who was buried here is now an angel in heaven."

"He is, my son," replies Helen, smiling



through her tears; "but Herbert Lee was once an angel on the earth, and I miss him."

A light, quick footstep sounded on the turf, and turning around, she saw her husband. Passing his arm tenderly around her, and wiping away her tears, he said:

"Darling, when the sunlight falls upon your hair, do you know, you always remind me of Keats's lines in 'The Eve of St. Agnes,' where he describes Madeline thus:

" 'She seemed a splendid angel newly drest,  
Save wings, for Heaven.' "

"Save wings, dearest," Helen replies, with a mischievous smile on her coral lips.

"Save wings," he answers gravely. "Long may it be before you acquire them, my precious wife."

"Amen!" Helen replies, softly and reverently.



















AUG 19 1908

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